# THE EMPIRE AT WAR

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Part IV

# INDIA

BY

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K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E.

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# PART IV

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# CHAPTER I

## INDIA BEFORE THE WAR

'A PLACE in the sun' was what Germany was incessantly striving to attain, and what she hoped to gain as a result of the war. She felt cramped in the centre of Europe and wanted to be out on the sea and in the sun. The Berlin–Baghdad Railway had a remarkable attraction for the Germans; this however was not because they had any wish or intention to remain in Baghdad as their final destination, but because Baghdad was a stepping-stone to something beyond—because in the distance was India.

India was attractive to them not only through the glamour of its sunshine and its Oriental profusion and magnificence, but for more solid and substantial reasons as well. Under the sun of India can be grown products which will not mature in chillier Germany. All tropical countries have a value for countries of the temperate zone. For the material needs of European civilization European countries must be able to procure certain raw materials and articles of food which can only be produced in tropical climates, and European countries also derive great benefit from an extensive market for the sale of their manufactures. In both these respects India possessed advantages for Germany. It produced what Germany could not produce, and it furnished an excellent market for German manufactures.

Germany could grow her own wheat and barley and also sugar. But of cotton she had the greatest need, as well as of jute, rubber, tea, and coffee. It was of high importance to her that she should be able to procure for her own use whatever India could spare of these valuable tropical products.

Then, again, India had before the war a population of 315 million people. The great mass of these are extremely poor, and their wants are few in comparison with the needs of European peoples. But their very numbers make the sum-total of their needs reach a considerable figure. They dress themselves for the most part in cotton clothes, so that they

require large quantities of cotton goods, and the development of so vast and so thickly populated a country creates a necessity for machinery and implements of all kinds, rails, and railway engines. So there was in India a large demand for those very articles of manufacture which Germany produced.

Now Germany before the war had free access to India. Her merchants could come and buy the products of India as freely as any British merchant, and they had in fact great business houses in Calcutta, Bombay, and other towns. Germans could also run and operate mines; and it was found at the commencement of the war that Germany had a practical monopoly of the wolfram mines at Tavoy in Burma from which tungsten for the hardening of steel is extracted. Germans could trade, reside, acquire land for business purposes, and sell the manufactures of Germany to the Indian people with no more let or hindrance than they would have experienced if they were Englishmen. In the old days of British rule in India the policy had been to exclude other Europeans from the trade of the country. It was the traditional policy of the times. Where Dutch or French had gained access they had excluded the British, and where the British gained access they excluded the Dutch and the French. But we had long given up that ancient policy; for many years past German trade was admitted to India on the same terms as British trade, and what small import and export duties there were were imposed for revenue purposes only. No discrimination whatever was made against the Germans.

German traders had made good use of their opportunities. The trade of Germany with India had increased astonishingly in recent years. In 1870 it was of insignificant amount. By 1914 it was beginning to rival the trade between India and Great Britain itself. In the valuable hide trade the Germans had by their energy and enterprise secured for themselves almost a monopoly. A German Consul-General of high status in the German Diplomatic Service was established in Calcutta, and made for himself a position of influence and importance.

When Germany had such a favourable position in India; when her business men were making such splendid use of the advantages they enjoyed; when their position was improving year by year; when the Germans could without any of the burdens and responsibilities of governing India come there and

purchase in an open market the tropical products they needed and sell their manufactures, it is difficult to see what more they could possibly require. They appeared to have the game in their own hands. By peaceful penetration they seemed to be getting all that they needed. Evidently, however, they thought they were *not* getting all they might get. They scrutinized the British administration and saw its defects. They saw that India was not a half or a quarter developed; that there were still great areas of land uncultivated which might be made productive; that owing to wasteful and inefficient agricultural methods the yield per acre on the land in cultivation was only half what it might be; that the forests were inadequately exploited; that the minerals had hardly been touched; and that communications were insufficiently provided. All this they saw, and they believed that if for the sluggish British administration there were substituted an energetic, efficient, masterful, pushful German administration the production of India could be doubled, trebled, or quadrupled. In addition matters could be so arranged that Germans could enjoy special advantages in competition with traders of other nations and wax rich in comparison with them. All these material advantages they saw and above them all was the glamour which would come from the conquest of India. The splendour of the German Emperor would be mightily increased if he was also the Emperor of India, and if England were reduced to the status of Holland.

Nor was the supplanting of the British by the Germans such a fanciful dream as might now appear. Not only Germans but even many Englishmen believed that if England were seriously threatened India would strive to rid herself of British rule. The British position in India was, to all appearances, extremely precarious. There were only 77,000 British troops in a country of 315 million inhabitants. Moreover this minute garrison was dependent for reinforcement upon a line of communication thousands of miles in length and exposed to attack at its very starting-point as well as at several points on the way from England to India. Half a century previously Indians had risen in arms against the British. It seemed a matter of course that if a Power so strong as Germany—strong by sea and strong by land—threatened England at the heart the Indians would instinctively seize the God-sent opportunity

to rid themselves for ever of their alien rulers. The tie which bound India to the Empire was brittle and would snap, the Germans thought, and there was much that had been transpiring in India in the years immediately preceding the war which would confirm them in this view.

In every country there is a certain amount of disaffection. There is always some section which is discontented with the existing form of government and which agitates to change it. India is no exception. There was never a time when among some sections of its huge population disaffection did not exist —now in a high degree of intensity now in a low, now in one form now in another. Disaffection always has existed and always will. It is against human nature to expect that 315 million people of different religions, different degrees of civilization, different races, will always—or ever—be absolutely content. Discontent and disaffection must always be expected in some quarter or other—sometimes among the Hindus, sometimes among the Mohammedans ; sometimes among the most backward, most ignorant and most prone to unreasoning excitement, and sometimes among the most advanced and most highly educated ; sometimes it will be inarticulate and inactive and sometimes it will be loud-voiced and eruptive.

In the half dozen years before the war this always existing disaffection was very active and very vociferous. It was a period of ' unrest '. The latent dislike of foreign rule was aroused, and the mainspring of the unrest was antagonism to the fundamental principles upon which Western society has been built up. For a century we had honestly and conscientiously, and with the best possible intentions, striven to better the conditions of the Indian peoples, to educate them, to fit them to take part in the government of their own country. We were imbued with the most worthy motives. We really meant well by the people of India, and we were convinced that what was good for us must be good for them. But the result was not fortunate. From what Indians had imbibed from our education, from what they picked up of Western civilization, from the closer contact with Europe which quicker and easier communication brought about, an antagonism to all the principles upon which Western society is built sprang up, and this antagonism was the mainspring of the unrest. Novel ideas, new needs, fresh grievances, unaccustomed standards,

strange models were constantly being brought forward and the Indian gorge rose up against them.

While portions of India were thus beginning to seethe and foment, an outside event occurred which heated Indians to boiling-point. A Power classed in the first rank of European Powers was beaten fairly and squarely—on sea as well as by land—by an Asiatic Power. Russia, the great Power which had so long been a threat to India, was beaten by Japan. If 30 million Japanese could do such a deed, what might not 300 million Indians do! They could at least get rid of the few thousand Englishmen who dominated India. Hopes ran high. A section of the people became frankly revolutionary. They preached the doctrine of deeds—of assassination, dynamite, outrages, dacoities, terrorism all round. Viceroys, civil officers, British men and women, anywhere and everywhere were to be bombed, shot, stabbed till British rule was cleared out of India. This doctrine had a special fascination for youth—with the results which will be presently narrated.

The centres of this active disaffection were, firstly, in the Bombay Presidency, among the Mahratta Brahmins, and secondly in Bengal.

The Mahratta Brahmins of the Deccan had in pre-British days wielded great power, and if they had been able to maintain their power over their generals, the original Scindias and Holkars, they might have succeeded the Moghuls in the Empire of India. They were unable to check and control their generals. The Mahratta power crumpled up and decayed, and it was the British and not the Mahrattas who succeeded the Moghuls. But these Mahratta Brahmins are able, well-educated, and masterful men. They remember their former glories, and in these years before the great war there were not a few who dreamed of a time when those glories would be renewed.

Foremost among these was Bal Gangadhar Tilak. He was an Indian of the Indians—an Indian of real Indian India—a member of the highest and most influential caste, the caste which through every vortex and vicissitude of chequered Indian history, through all the clash and conflict of warring sects and races and religions, had striven to keep India Indian. He was of a race, too, which only a century back had shown a combination of martial and masterful qualities above all the

other races of India. He was not only a Brahmin but a Mahratta Brahmin. By his birth, his social qualities, his innate capacity, his special training, he was a true leader of men, an unmistakable influence in the land, a towering personality. He had unexampled opportunities—if he chose to avail himself of them—of appealing to the superstitions of the multitude, of stirring up racial fanaticism, of awakening hostile sentiment, of arousing antagonism to whatever was not Indian and Indian of the most pronounced and bigoted type. With his commanding ability, his passionate temperament, his forcefulness, and his ambition he was bound to chafe under British ascendancy and to strike out against British ideas.

Early in the eighties of last century, when he first entered public life, he gave indications of what was to be his line. He smote hard at his 'moderate' countrymen who advocated bringing Indian institutions into harmony with Western standards. He was no believer in harmony. He revived incendiary methods in the press and imparted a note of personal violence into newspaper polemics. He raised storms of passion and prejudice. He denounced as renegades and traitors to the cause of Hinduism all who had any truck with Western ideas and methods. He proclaimed in the schools and colleges that unless they learnt to employ force they must expect to see the downfall of their ancient institutions. He preached physical training and the use of weapons in order to develop the martial instincts of the race. With fiery eloquence he inflamed the populace against the 'foreigner' and sought to revive the memories of ancient glories. There was to be no scruple about the methods by which Hindu ascendancy was to be regained.

'Great men', he said, 'are above the common principles of morality. Such principles do not reach the pedestal of a great man. Did Shivaji commit a sin in killing Afzul Khan? The answer to this question can be found in the Mahabharata itself. The Divine Krishna teaching in the *Gita* tells us we may kill even our teachers and our kinsmen, and no blame attaches if we are not actuated by selfish desires. Shivaji did nothing from a desire to fill his own belly. It was with a praiseworthy object that he murdered Afzul Khan, for the good of others. If thieves enter our house, and we have not strength to drive them out, should we not without hesitation shut them in and burn them alive? God has conferred on

the foreigners no grant of Hindustan inscribed on imperishable brass. Shivaji [1] drove them forth out of the land of his birth, but he was guiltless of the sin of covetousness. Do not circumscribe your vision like frogs in a well. Rise above the Penal Code into the rarefied atmosphere of the sacred Bhagavad Gita and consider the action of great men.'

Such was the doctrine which he inculcated year after year, utilizing every suitable occasion; with unceasing activity he worked upon the passions of the people and especially upon the raw and sensitive enthusiasm of youth. He taught that India was happier, better, and more prosperous under Hindu rule than it ever had been under foreigners; that if the British had done some good they had also drained the wealth of the country and undermined the social and religious institutions; and he held out the prospect that if power were restored to the Brahmins the golden age would be once more revived.

His influence was not confined to his own province. His doctrines and his example produced a profound impression in Bengal. Emotional Bengalis were carried away by his indomitable energy and his overpowering masterfulness. Their history and their character was very different from that of the Mahrattas. For centuries before the British era they had been under Mohammedan rule. They had never bid for supremacy in India. They had no martial instincts. But they were quick and supple of brain, highly sensitive, and responsive to external stimulus.

The most prominent of those Bengalis who came under the sway of Tilak's influence was Bepin Chandra Pal. He was a man of great intellectual ability and high integrity and sincerity of character. Like Tilak he had received both an Eastern and a Western education. He had also travelled considerably in both Europe and America, and he could speak and write English with copious fluency. With these qualifications he rapidly became the chief spokesman and advocate of the idea of Swaraj or self-government for India. He ridiculed the notion that India must necessarily be dependent upon Great Britain. India could and should govern herself. The increase of the number of Indians employed in the civil administration of India was in his view quite inadequate for the needs of India. A Civil Service even if entirely manned by Indians would not

[1] The founder of the Mahratta power.

be able to direct or dictate policy. It would simply have to carry out a policy laid down by others. 'The supplanting of European by Indian agency will not make for self-government' in India. 'Our programme is that we shall so work in the country, so combine the resources of the people, so organize the forces of the nation, so develop the instinct of freedom in the community, that by this means we shall—*shall* in the imperative—compel the submission to our will of any power that may set itself against us.'

Two methods were to be employed for the attainment of self-government. British commerce was to be killed by the boycott of imported goods, and the existing Government was to be brought to a standstill by passive resistance and the boycott of Government service. 'We can reduce every Indian in Government service to the position of a man who has fallen from the dignity of Indian citizenship.' Social honours might be refused: the chair not given or the daughter declined in marriage; and the Government service be brought into social contempt.

Nor was the self-government which Mr. Pal advocated to be self-government within the Empire.

'We refuse to be satisfied with a shadowy self-government . . . Self-government means the right of self-taxation. . . . The moment we have the right of self-taxation . . . we shall impose a heavy prohibitive protective tariff upon every inch of textile fabric from Manchester, upon every blade of knife that comes from Leeds. We shall refuse to grant admittance to a British soul into our territory. We would not allow British capital to be engaged in the development of Indian resources. We would not grant any right to British capitalists to dig up the mineral wealth of the land and carry it to their own isles.'

When such doctrines as these were being preached by men of force and eloquence like Tilak and Pal, when the native press was even more outspoken, stating that 'the Indian has come to see that independence is the panacea of all his evils: he will therefore even swim in a sea of blood to reach his goal', and when anonymous pamphlets were distributed broadcast throughout India directly inciting Indians to murder all English men and women and then clear the land of the British, there is little wonder that many an excited, ill-balanced youth was carried off his legs. Englishmen in the Civil Service were murdered. Sir Curzon Wyllie was assassinated in the heart of

London. Attempts were made to derail the Viceregal train and to bomb Lord Minto; and the culminating point was reached when Lord Hardinge was actually struck by a bomb while riding through the streets of Delhi.

This fervent agitation for the independence of India was being carried on; this hatred of the British was being preached; these attempts to rid India of the British were being made in the period just immediately preceding the outbreak of the Great War. India was then more frequently visited by Germans than ever before. The Crown Prince, Grand Dukes, officers of the General Staff, diplomatists of eminence, men of science, men of business were every year coming in increasing numbers to India, and they had every opportunity for observing what was going on. There was no let upon their movements. They could read or hear all that was written or said by these advocates of Indian independence. They could see them personally if they so desired. To these Germans it must have seemed a certainty, a matter beyond all shadow of doubt, that if Great Britain were at war with Germany the Indians would eagerly seize the golden opportunity to throw off for ever the hated British yoke. When Indians were agitating for independence in time of peace, while England was disengaged and had ample time and power for dealing with disturbances, how much more likely was it that they would resort to serious open rebellion when England was engaged in defending her very life and would presumably be powerless to deal with insurrection in a distant dependency!

## CHAPTER II

### AT THE OUTBREAK

In the event what actually happened was precisely the opposite of what seemed so certain. Instead of India jumping at the opportunity of severing the ties which bound her to Great Britain, she sprang to Great Britain's side. Countless meetings to express loyalty were held throughout India. The rulers of the Native States, numbering nearly seven hundred altogether, with one accord rallied to the defence of the Empire. Of the twenty-seven states that maintained Imperial Service Troops every one, and immediately on the outbreak, placed the services of their corps at the disposal of the Viceroy. Many chiefs and nobles—including the veteran Sir Pertab Singh over 70 years of age—offered their personal services. A number of chiefs combined to provide a hospital ship, to be named the *Loyalty*, for the use of the expeditionary force. Large sums of money were also placed by the chiefs at the disposal of Government for providing horses. Some frontier chiefs offered camels with their drivers. A Central Indian chief offered his troops, his treasury, and even his personal jewellery. All the chiefs subscribed generously to the war funds which were started.

Over the whole of India there was the same spirit. From every quarter thousands of telegrams and letters expressing loyalty and the desire to assist were sent to the Viceroy and to the Governors and Lieutenant-Governors. Every community, all manner of different associations, religious and political, and innumerable individuals, offered their resources or their personal services. Typical examples were addresses from the All-India Moslem League, the Taluqdars of Oudh, the Association of Punjab Chiefs, the Provincial Congresses of Madras and the United Provinces, the Parsee community in Bombay and the Punjab Association representing orthodox Sikhs.

The sentiments of educated Indians found expression in a resolution, passed unanimously in the Viceroy's Legislative Council, which declared that 'the members of this Council,

LORD HARDINGE OF PENSHURST

as voicing the feeling that animates the whole of the people of India, desire to give expression to their feelings of unswerving loyalty and enthusiastic devotion to their King-Emperor, and an assurance of their unflinching support to the British Government'. They desired at the same time to express the opinion that the people of India, in addition to the military assistance now being afforded by India to the Empire, would wish to share in the heavy financial burden now imposed by the war on the United Kingdom . . . and thus to demonstrate the unity of India and the Empire.

Sir Gangadhar Chitnavis, one of the elected members of the Council, in moving this resolution said that the British Empire was as one great family under one beneficent Crown. Within its doors it might have its difficulties and its differences of opinion,

'But let not the world mistake us', he said, 'should any outside danger threaten us we stand shoulder to shoulder round our mighty mother, England, and her enemies will find us arrayed in solid phalanx by her side, ready to meet any danger and render any sacrifices for the sake of the great and glorious Empire of which we are proud to call ourselves citizens. Indians of all ranks, religions, and shades of political opinion scorn and repel the suggestion that there exists any party or body or individual in their country that hopes for aught but victory for England. We know full well on what their loyal sentiment is based. It is based on gratitude for the past, on contentment in the present, on confidence for the future—a confidence deepened by our sense of loyalty and our joy at the opportunity which has been given us to prove our claim to be regarded as worthy of the noble fellowship of the Empire. . . . There is a growing desire that we should offer on this occasion all our resources in the service of our King and Emperor. That has been the prevailing sentiment in the crowded meetings convened throughout the country. We shall be untrue to ourselves and to the people we represent if here in Council we do not reiterate the sentiments that prevail outside, and make it clear to Your Excellency that we are and shall be ready to bear our share in the financial burden that will be imposed by the war. We know that our present condition is due to the peace we have enjoyed under British rule, that our very existence depends upon the continuance of that rule.'

The Mohammedan member, Raja Sir Muhammad Ali Muhammad Khan of Mahmudabad, seconded the resolution,

stating that it represented 'the very essence of Indian public opinion'. A Sikh member, Sirdar Daljit Singh, said that India cheerfully joined in the war because she believed

'in her heart of hearts that her and England's fortune are one, and that in being arrayed side by side with the British Expeditionary Force in this gigantic struggle, she is not doing anything else than fighting her own battle. Unity of interests and oneness of purpose are urging her on . . . we are all prepared shoulder to shoulder with our fellow subjects beyond the seas to uphold the honour of the British flag with all our might. All our resources, physical and material, are at the disposal of His Most Gracious Majesty, and we are ready to sacrifice our last man and our last penny in this noble cause. Every Indian, from the prince to the peasant, literate and illiterate alike, is imbued with a spirit of whole-hearted devotion to the Crown. The demonstrations of loyalty and offers of active service, which are of an unprecedented magnitude in the history of this great country, are a testimony of the appreciation of the manifold benefits derived by the people from the British Raj.' . . . .

Mr. Monteath, on behalf of the mercantile community of Calcutta, said: 'Britons and Indians have joined as one in India to make her what she is. As one without the other could not have made the Indian Empire of to-day, so let India come forward and take her share in the burden of maintaining the cause of justice, honour, peace, and prosperity.' . . . Even the Bengali, Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjee, who for years had been a constant critic of Government and at one time considerably influenced by Tilak, said:

'We, the representatives of the Indian people, desire to assure Your Excellency of our unswerving loyalty to the Crown and of our firm resolve to stand by the Empire in this crisis. . . . Some of my friends referred to the tidal wave of loyalty which swept through the country from one end to the other, capturing the hearts and imagination of a great and vast people. From every section of our population, from the highest to the lowest, from the prince in his palace to the peasant in his cottage, there has emanated the most overwhelming evidence of our supreme devotion to the Empire. . . . Our loyalty has sprung from the fountains of our emotions, but it has its roots also in the reasoned judgment. We are loyal because we are patriotic; because we believe that with the stability and permanence of British rule are bound up the best prospects of Indian advancement. We believe that, under British rule, we are bound to obtain, sooner or later,

sooner rather than later, the full rights of British citizenship, and to secure for ourselves a place, I hope an honourable place, among the free States of a great and federated Empire.'

The wondrous unity thus displayed—a unity embracing all and every part of India, a unity of all classes, communities, and creeds, a unity of peoples far more varied and different than the peoples of all Europe—and the deep-set purpose to work with every other part in the defence of the whole Empire, came as a surprise even to those who knew India best and had most faith in her attachment to the Empire. We may well pause for a moment and reflect on this remarkable circumstance. We have seen how liable Indians are to be carried away by forceful suggestion. They are easily swayed for good or for bad. But they are much more easily influenced for good than for evil. And for this reason: that they are by nature admirers of the good. They were convinced from the first that in this war we were in the right—that we were fighting in a righteous cause. They admired the resolute manner in which we threw ourselves unhesitatingly into the contest. They admired, too, the way in which all the Overseas Dominions leapt to the aid of the mother country and recognized in an instant that her cause was their cause, that if she were ruined they also would be ruined, and all the ideals on which their whole young lives were being built would perish with her. Sensitive India, ideal-loving India, was profoundly influenced and affected by the spectacle. The contagion touched her also. Her heart also was moved. Her eyes also were opened. In a flash she realized all that England, all that the Empire meant. She thrilled with the joy of battling by the side of England, and by the side of Great Britain's sturdy offspring, in the great and glorious cause. She wanted to emulate them in devotion to the Empire and to the ideals on which it is built.

But even under this contagious influence India would never have risen to the occasion with such fervour and such unanimity if her innate disposition had not been in the same direction—if she had not been at heart inclined towards union with Great Britain. Indians are by nature affectionate. They are quick to detect affection and quicker to respond to it. This is one of the few general statements which can be made as to all the inhabitants of what is really more like a continent than a

country. Whether they be Bengalis from the east, Mahrattas from the west, Punjabis from the north, or Madrasis from the south, whether they be Sikhs or Gurkhas, Pathans or Rajputs, Hindus, Mohammedans, Buddhists, or Nature-worshippers, the people of India have this common characteristic: they are Indian in the affectionateness of their nature. Englishmen who serve in India experience many rubs. They exasperate and are exasperated by Indians. There are many times when the one feels he can stand the other no longer and would gladly sever all connexion. Yet when the moment arrives for an officer to leave his regiment, a civil servant his district, a lady her household, the trait in those they are about to leave which stands out conspicuous above all the rest is the warm affection of the Indians; and as with individuals so with India as a whole in her relation to Great Britain as a whole. The heart of India has been quick to detect and quicker to respond to the affection towards her which Great Britain bears in her heart. That affection has not always been conspicuous or transparent. Oftentimes the heart of England has appeared cold and hard, and crusted over with selfishness and pride. Nevertheless India has felt sure it was there. She has seen it in our sovereigns, and she has rightly taken our sovereigns as representing the heart of Great Britain.

By the very fact that the sovereigns of Great Britain are not autocrats but constitutional monarchs they embody and objectify, interpret and make manifest what is the true will and feeling of the people. In their great public utterances and actions they give expression to what is in the heart and mind of the whole people. They express, too, not the transitory mood of the moment but the long tradition, the essential attitude of those they govern; and this method of personifying in a monarch the general will and disposition of the people was a very happy circumstance for the relations of Great Britain and India. For Indians love to focus their feelings upon a person. Abstractions, like 'Government', mean little to them. It is a tangible flesh and blood person that they crave for, and in our recent monarchs we have been particularly fortunate. They have been especially felicitous in interpreting and expressing the deeper feelings of Great Britain towards India. Queen Victoria was peculiarly happy in this respect, and owing partly to the length of her reign, partly to her being a woman,

the Indians felt that they knew and understood her and that she knew and understood and felt for them. Her officials might be rough and rude and over-bearing, as is the way of officials, but this was not how the Great Queen would have it. *She* had their true welfare at heart; *she* was ever watching over their interests. Many other important matters she had to engage her attention; but her heart was always with her Indian people, feeling for them in times of affliction, rejoicing with them in prosperity. The depth of devotion which Indians felt towards Queen Victoria is incredible to those who do not know India. It would be thought that villages far in the interior, remote from great towns and railways and most of what keeps India outwardly in touch with England, would scarcely have heard of her or if they had heard would have taken little interest in her. Yet on her death there was weeping and lamentation in the remotest villages, and the sorrow of these simple villagers and their affection for her was absolutely genuine. So also, at the opposite end of the scale of Indian life, was the devotion of the chiefs. As one ruler can sympathize with another so the chiefs knew that Queen Victoria felt for them. In her they knew they had a friend—one who would maintain their rights and uphold their dignity. Those of them who had visited England were deeply impressed by the wonderful blending of graciousness and dignity with which she received them, and by that underlying strain of warm and human sympathy which ran through all her actions. The proudest chief in India was proud to be connected with such a sovereign, and the roughest has spoken of her as divine.

The root attitude of Great Britain to India has never been that of conqueror to conquered. England never did conquer India. What she did was to establish order where she found chaos—and establish order often at the request of, and always with the aid of, Indians themselves. The English went there—more than three hundred years ago, in the time of Queen Elizabeth—for trade and nothing else. The East India Company was a trading company. It wanted to do business with the people of India, not to conquer and rule them. It wanted to purchase the spices and the cotton and muslins of India with the woollen goods and manufactures of England. But it had to carry on its trade in the teeth of keen rivalry from the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the French, and in the face of

increasing disorder among the 'country powers'. It had either to abandon its purpose, withdraw from the scene, and leave its rivals to establish order and carry on the trade, or else it had to step in itself. The reiterated instructions to agent after agent, and governor after governor, to stick to business and avoid being entangled in the intricate politics of India are proof enough that the Company hated the idea of interference, and would have much preferred to pursue its own very lucrative business. It had no turn nor taste for politics, and the maintenance of armed forces for the establishment of order meant heavy expense and diminished profits. The solid common sense of practical City business men was dead against embarking on a course of political interference in the affairs of India—against raising armies, siding with one chief, opposing another, and administering densely populated districts. It saw no end to the complications in which the company might be involved, and it saw all its future profits being swallowed up in the expenses of defence and administration. But this same common sense saw also that there was no alternative between this military, political, and administrative interference and the utter abandonment of their trade with India. The country powers were wholly incapable of preserving order. Even in the time of the great Akbar, when they first went there, the English traders could not rely on that protection from attack which the Company had a right to expect. They were liable to attack by pirates at sea, by marauders on land, and by the Portuguese on both land and sea; and Akbar's rule, firm in the centre of India though it was, was weak at the circumference, while on the sea it simply did not exist. Akbar had no navy. After Akbar's time matters grew steadily worse till, at the time when the Moghul Empire finally broke up, India was nothing but a seething cauldron of petty states at incessant war with one another. There was no coherence and no order. The British Company was driven by the hard force of circumstances into interference. It simply had to go in and bring about some kind of order. First of all in its own settlements it had to set up an armed force for the maintenance of order. Then it had to use this force—augmented perhaps—for the establishment of order in the country immediately around its settlements. Neighbouring chiefs would apply for the service of the Company's forces to

repel attacks on their own territory and the Company would be drawn into an alliance. Irresistibly it came about, under the pressure of two dominating factors, firstly the need for establishing order, and secondly the presence of a rival who would undertake the task and destroy all trade between India and England if the Company refused to take it up, that British influence, authority, and ascendancy increased—and increased till the British became the dominant power in India.

There was no sudden conquest of India—there was no real conquest at all. All came about gradually and inevitably in the course of between two and three centuries, and the point especially to mark is that throughout the long process the British have been the cohesive element which, insinuating itself into the life of India, at last succeeded in holding India together and making of it a stable fabric—they have been a stabilizing element introduced into the body politic rather than an overpowering weight which has suddenly crashed down on a weaker people and crushed them to pieces beneath it. From the first the British employed Indians in the maintenance of order. They organized defence corps, drilled and armed natives for the defence of settlements. Later when they formed armies the proportion of Europeans to Indians was very small. To this day there are two Indian soldiers in India to every British soldier, and the number of British soldiers in proportion to the whole population is as one to four thousand. Moreover, the British always tried to preserve friendship with the chiefs of India. It was no part of their policy to turn out the chiefs. The old trading company was only too thankful if it could find on its borders some good strong reliable chieftainship which would serve as a bulwark and save the Company from the necessity of any further territorial expansion. It was only when the chiefs were actively hostile, or when they were so incapable of preserving order in their own territory as to become a source of danger to the Company's territories, that the Company took up arms against a chief. The existence at the present day of nearly seven hundred chiefs of varying degrees of importance, from the Nizam of Hyderabad ruling over eleven millions of inhabitants to hill chieftains whose subjects do not number more than a few hundreds, is testimony to the tendency of British policy. The Punjab is a specially good example. In the Punjab are many Sikh

chiefs like the Maharajas of Patiala and Kapurthala who always maintained friendly relations with the British Government. In the most troublous times they never swerved in their friendship and they remain to this day. As long as Ranjit Singh ruled over the northern part of the Punjab he also remained staunch in his friendship, and the British respected it and were thankful to have him there as a powerful friend. But on his death there was no stability but constant disorder. First one then another seized the throne. The powerful Sikh forces were led across the British border against the British and war resulted. The Sikhs were defeated and an effort was made to set up a stable government; but again the British were attacked, and to prevent further disorder it became necessary to bring that portion of the Punjab under direct British rule.

As in the Punjab so in India as a whole, a part, about a third, still remains under its own rulers and part is directly administered by the British, and here comes in the second point of importance to remark. The British in that portion which they directly rule do not aim at keeping the people down by sheer force. They have deliberately set themselves to train the people to take an increasing share in the government of their own country. The Chinese after they had conquered Turkistan simply left the people alone. All over the country they built great walled cities alongside the native cities, and in these cities they themselves lived. They did a little—though not much—to improve communications so that their high officials might travel about the more conveniently; and they kept the peace. They also used such native functionaries as were already in existence for the detailed administration of the country. But they did not consider it any part of their duty to set to work deliberately to educate and train up the people for the government of their country or to improve their condition of life and raise them morally as well as materially. This the British in India did. They did consider it their duty to elevate the condition of the people. They had been reluctant to interfere in Indian affairs. But being compelled by circumstances to establish an influence and exercise predominant authority there, they determined that they must use their influence and authority to better the lot of the Indian people. The British would not be content with the role of policemen

or even of judges. They meant to be teachers and educators as well. As long ago as 1833 the British Parliament laid down that Indians were to be trained and fitted for the government of their own country, and when fitted were to be so employed. Thirty years later Indians were associated with the Viceroy's Executive Council to form a Legislative Council. The numbers were at various periods increased, and an increasing proportion of them were elected by Indians themselves instead of being nominated by the Viceroy. Their powers were also increased. More and more Indians were employed in the administration of the country and placed in higher and higher positions, till they occupied seats on the benches of the High Court and in the Viceroy's Executive Council itself, as well as on the Council of the Secretary of State for India in London. In the sphere of local self-government their powers were similarly increased: they were allowed to elect their own representatives on Municipal Boards and District Councils. The whole tendency of British rule for a century past has been to fit Indians to rule themselves and to employ them for their own governance as soon as they were fit. The British may not have employed the best methods and may have been too sluggish. The execution of their purpose may have been faulty and may have been dilatory. But the will and intention were there. They meant not only to keep order but to fit the people for self-government. They worked not to curb freedom but to make freedom possible.

So not only was order maintained, justice evenly dispensed, roads and railways built, material resources developed, trade fostered, but the people were better educated and associated more and more with the British in the Government of India. The bulk of the people were still miserably poor, but they were secure on their land or in their business and their condition was steadily improving. We can understand, then, why it was that when the call came to them in August 1914 they were predisposed to respond to it. They were quite unaware of the depth of their feeling. As so often happens in crises of life, they acted with a spontaneity and decision which was surprising even to themselves. They realized that the British connexion was a great deal more to them than they had ever imagined. The chiefs, the gentry, responsible public men, as well as the great mass of the cultivators of the soil—all those

who had a stake in the country and would fall if their country fell—realized of a sudden what Great Britain was to them—realized that if Great Britain fell India would fall too and they with it. This was not reasoned out. In those tense tremendous moments it was instinctively felt, and felt with deep conviction. Hence the wonderful enthusiasm with which India instantly joined with Great Britain in the war.[1]

[1] Chapters II and III have been largely based upon *India's Contribution to the Great War*, published by authority of the Government of India, 1923.

## CHAPTER III

### INDIA'S EFFORT

WHEN India was glowing with this fervent and most generous enthusiasm it might have seemed on the face of it that her entry into the war would have a decisive effect. Germany and her Austrian ally together had but half the population India could number. India had also great natural resources. She can produce what Germany and Austria produce—wheat, barley, cattle, sheep ; and in addition, owing to her tropical climate, she can produce what Germany and her ally so much needed but which they could not by any possibility produce, namely, cotton, rubber, and jute, and in addition rice, tea and coffee, coco-nuts, and many oil-seeds. India possesses also vast quantities of coal and iron and water-power of immense extent.

This great advantage India had in comparison with our enemies, overwhelming superiority both in numbers and in natural resources. But India labours under many counteracting disadvantages. The Indian peoples, though numerous, have not the physical or mental energy of the Central Europeans and they lack too the initiative and resource as well as the organizing capacity. The Indian cultivator with all his advantages does not get from Indian soil anything like what Germans by their intelligence, industry, and co-operative and organizing capacity get from German soil. The Indians through long ages have failed to develop the mineral resources of their country, and we British though we have done something, have been sadly supine in stimulating the Indians to increased and wiser efforts in these directions. The Indian people are consequently a poor people—extremely poor. Individually they had neither the physique and stamina nor the intellectual force of the foes to whom they were now opposed, and collectively they were more deficient still, for they had no native capacity for collective action.

A further drawback under which they suffered was their system of caste. Caste has many advantages. It keeps the members of a particular community together as a community,

and preserves them from being swept away, lost, and merged in a general *mêlée*. During the many wars and invasions of India the different caste communities have to a great extent preserved themselves intact. But in the rigidity to which caste has developed in India, where the member of one caste cannot eat with the member of another, and the member of a high caste looks upon the member of a low caste as a pollution, caste becomes a terrible impediment in the way of instantaneous and whole-hearted unity of action of the whole body politic. When a high-caste soldier will not to save his life take a cup of water from a low-caste person there can never be that intense intimacy of union between all individuals which success in war demands.

In leadership also Indians were lacking. Here again we British may possibly have been to blame in so far that we have done little to foster, encourage, and bring out whatever capacity for leadership the Indians might possess. But India is not naturally productive of leadership. The people are inherently and by tradition disposed to look to authority. They will obey commands with docility, but few will care to come forward and lead. The natural propensity of Indians is to place themselves under those who will lead rather than to take up the burden and responsibilities of leadership themselves. This propensity has unconsciously and undesignedly been rather encouraged than discouraged by the British. India has never furnished any great and first-rate military leaders whose names ring out in the annals of the world. But in the wars following on the break-up of the Moghul Empire among the Mahrattas, Sikhs, Pindaris, and others there sprang up many leaders who put our best troops on their mettle. Hyder Ali is a conspicuous example. In the Mutiny Tantia Tope showed considerable military capacity. Among the commanders of regiments in the Sikh wars, especially, were Indians who evoked great admiration from British officers who fought against them and who, moreover, subsequently had these very men serving under them.

This military capacity, such as it was, the tendency of British rule has been to sap into and emasculate. When the necessity for a frontier expedition has arisen the Government of India have naturally wanted to get it through as rapidly and also as economically as possible, and the way to do this has been

to employ the most efficient troops they have at their disposal. A general appointed to the command of an expedition will also naturally ask for the best troops and the best officers, and both Government and general have believed that those troops are the best and most efficient and will carry the expedition through to a successful conclusion most rapidly who are trained in peace and led in war by British officers. They have believed that troops who during peace have been trained by Indians and who in war would be led by Indians would be less efficient and less reliable. They would require just the same amount of transport and supplies—those twin basic necessities of all campaigns—but would do the work less expeditiously and consequently at greater cost and less effectively. Practical experience of Indian warfare also showed that Indian regiments which had heavy casualties among their British officers became unsteady and unreliable. The natural tendency arising from all these considerations was to emphasize the role of the British officer in military training, organization, administration and leadership, and to diminish the importance of the Indian, so that at the outbreak of the war there were no Indians in Indian regiments who were the equals of British 2nd Lieutenants; all Indians, however long and however distinguished their service, had to take their orders from a British 2nd Lieutenant, even though he had no war service whatever and his peace service might not have extended beyond a year. Nor were there Indians in high positions in the military administration as there were in the civil administration. This circumstance, however necessary and natural it may have been, must have had, and did have, a devitalizing effect on Indian military spirit, and serves in some degree to account for the fact that India with all her hundreds of millions of men was able to put forth but a meagre military effort in comparison with that of her foes.

Nor should we forget that the armed forces in India were not organized or in any case regarded as a potential reserve to the armed forces of the Empire. 'The primary functions of the pre-war Army in India were twofold, namely, the maintenance of order within and on the borders of British India, and secondly, the provision of a field army capable, should the necessity arise, of undertaking a campaign beyond the border' for the purpose of defence against external aggression. 'The

Army in India was in no sense maintained for meeting external obligations of an imperial character', according to the Commander-in-Chief in India in his final dispatch on the part taken by India in the prosecution of the war. There had indeed been occasions, such as the dispatch of Indian troops to Malta in 1878,[1] upon which small contingents from India had been employed in support of Imperial interests in other parts of the world. But it had never been the policy of the Government to maintain troops in India in excess of those actually required for the protection of her own interests. There was the organization for providing a force for the defence of India itself; but there was not the organization for providing a great force for expeditions overseas. The committee which had reported on the Army in India in 1912 had indeed expressed the opinion that 'the Army in India should be so organized and equipped as to be capable of affording ready overseas co-operation, when the situation in India allows of it, in such direction as H.M. Government may determine'. But while the idea had thus been mooted and to a certain extent officially recognized, financial difficulties had prevented steps being taken to give effect to the proposal.

For these several reasons it was difficult to utilize and bring into practical effect the enthusiasm which India showed on the outbreak of the war, and actually to put in the field a force at all commensurate either in numbers or in quality with her vast population. India might have thrice the numbers of the Germanic Powers, but her military effort could not possibly be anything like in proportion to her numbers or her enthusiasm.

If men's enthusiasm is not utilized while it is still at white heat it is apt to die down and go out. There is nothing so disheartening as being ready and willing to make any and every sacrifice one could possibly be called upon to make and yet to find no scope or opportunity for any useful effort. In England there was in those early days naturally even more enthusiasm for the war than there was in India. Men in millions were burning to join in the fight. But after the first two or three months a cold chill crept over the nation, and this came from two causes. Firstly, dead secrecy as to the movement of troops and as to the fighting taking place was

[1] See vol. i, pp. 53–4. In that volume is given a record of the overseas services of the Indian Army prior to 1914.

imposed; so that the nation became enveloped in darkness. No regiment, no general, no officer, no man could be given a send-off because no one knew when or where they were going. Nor did any one know what was happening on sea or land. Even when reports of fighting came it was suspected that it was only the best and not the worst that was published. All this was deadly damping to any enthusiasm. The second cause of the chilling of enthusiasm was that there was not the machinery at hand for dealing with an immense rush of men to the colours. They could not be housed, or clothed, or armed straight away on the spot. The men were wanted right enough but wanted gradually, and as it became possible to make use of them. Those who volunteered were not therefore received with much sign of warmth. They were—albeit unavoidably—kept hanging about inadequately housed, insufficiently clothed, and for a long time without any proper arms at all. From this cause also enthusiasm was chilled. It was much the same in India. The Government of India is at all times a chilly government to serve. It envelops itself in mystery and dwells on heights aloof from poor struggling humanity in the dull plains below. The habitual mystery was still further deepened by war. When England could be allowed to know so little, India could obviously not be allowed to know more. If India could have been allowed to see the war as spectators see a football match she would no doubt have felt the thrill and excitement, and the first enthusiasm would have continued unabated and would even have been augmented. But when she saw and heard even less than we in England, as being nearer to the scene, saw and heard, enthusiasm naturally waned.

Great therefore though the initial enthusiasm was, and heartily as the Indians desired to join the rest of the Empire in the war against Germany and to co-operate with the other Imperial forces, when it came to translating this keen desire into effective action many drawbacks and deficiencies revealed themselves.

At the outbreak of war the Army in India consisted of some 77,000 British and 159,000 Indians. Out of this force a field army had been organized nominally consisting of 9 divisions and 8 cavalry brigades; but in reality only 7 divisions and 5 cavalry brigades were ready for service, and these, though fairly adequately equipped for frontier warfare, were

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not provided with much of the equipment essential in a campaign against a modern army. The field army had no motor transport, was ill supplied with telephone equipment, and was short of other important requisites. Moreover, the Indian division at full strength was only equal to about two-thirds of a British division, it had only one brigade of field artillery as against four, it had no field howitzers or heavy guns, its infantry battalions had a war establishment only three-quarters of that of the battalions of a British division, and if it had a pioneer battalion, which British divisions at the outset of the war did not possess, two mountain batteries armed with 10-pounders, and a regiment of divisional cavalry in place of one squadron, these were little compensation for its weakness in artillery.[1] It was a further weakness that the Indian Army was ill provided with reserves, in both quantity and quality; the Indian reservist as a rule proved too old for service and very inefficient, and the Indian Army Reserve of Officers only mustered 40. The system of raising and organizing regiments did not make it easy to maintain the strength or efficiency of the units in the field. Of 125 infantry regiments only 11 had a second battalion, and though the remainder were linked in groups of three, officers and men of one unit in the group being liable to be transferred to the others, any extensive drain on the 'linked' battalions meant reducing the efficiency of the others to keep one efficient. When a battalion had to find a whole double company as a draft for a 'link' on active service it was rendered incapable of taking the field itself for months to come. The system proved quite unsuited for the heavy demands of the situation, and the evil was aggravated by the low peace establishment of Indian units.

But with all these defects the Indian Army contained many regiments with high traditions and standards, recruited from martial races with fine fighting records, led by officers of capacity and with experience of active service, and its existence enabled India to stand out at the beginning of the war as the one portion of the Empire outside the United Kingdom in which there was a trained and highly disciplined army of Regular soldiers ready at once to take the field. 'Bis dat qui

[1] The Lahore and Meerut Divisions were only provided with a more or less adequate force of field artillery by adding to each two 18-pounder brigades allotted to other formations, and even so they had no howitzers and no 60-pounders.

cito dat ' and the value of India's contribution to the defence of the Empire lay conspicuously in the promptitude with which it was rendered at one of the most critical moments of the whole war. The call on India was immediate and urgent, and the Indian Army was ready to answer it.

The Home Government wanted two infantry divisions and one cavalry brigade to be sent from India for garrison duty in Egypt and the Sudan. It was an unfortunate moment for mobilization and the dispatch of forces overseas, as a large proportion of the British troops were located in summer quarters in the hills, in many cases at long distances from the railway; the Indian troops were largely on leave; a considerable number of British officers were at home on furlough, and of these 530 were detained on the outbreak of war for employment under the War Office.[1] Moreover, the incidence of the monsoon season was a severe handicap to Indian troops, the bulk of whom had never before crossed the ocean. In spite of these drawbacks the 3rd (Lahore) and 7th (Meerut) Divisions and the 9th (Secunderabad) Cavalry Brigade were mobilized and made ready for dispatch overseas.[2] But Lord Hardinge and the Government of India urged that the relegation of their troops to garrison duty would be keenly felt by the men themselves, and that it was most desirable, from every point of view, that India should be represented on the European front. The destination of the contingent was accordingly changed to Marseilles. At the same time a request was received for a complete cavalry division, and subsequently for a second cavalry division, instead of the one cavalry brigade originally asked for; these were at once placed under orders, and the first convoy transporting the contingent to France sailed from Bombay on the 25th of August, i. e. within three weeks of the declaration of war. The bulk of the force had disembarked at Marseilles before the end of September, and on the 22nd of October the 57th (Wilde's) Rifles came into the fighting line in Flanders. The total strength of the original contingent dispatched to France amounted approximately to 16,000 British and 28,500 Indian ranks.

[1] These officers were largely employed in raising and training units of the 'New Armies' many of which owed no small debt to their help, so that here also India contributed notably to the war effort of the Empire.

[2] The 6th (Poona) Division referred to below was also destined originally for Egypt or Europe.

A request was also received within the first few days of the war for the preparation of a mixed force including six battalions to deal with German East Africa, and for three additional battalions for the protection of Zanzibar and the Mombasa–Nairobi railway, the operation of the latter being controlled by the Colonial Office. The dispatch of the former was somewhat delayed by the shortage of shipping and the difficulty of providing naval escort, as the German cruisers *Emden* and *Königsberg* were at large and the former had even appeared off Madras. But the force eventually arrived off Mombasa on the 31st of October, and sailed for Tanga next day. One of the three battalions for British East Africa, the 29th Punjabis, sailed on the 19th of August, and was in action at Tsavo on the 6th of September. With the arrival of the remaining two battalions the two forces were amalgamated under one command. The strength of these two contingents, which contained a large proportion of Imperial Service Troops, that is troops of the Indian States trained for imperial service and placed at the disposal of Government by their respective chiefs,[1] amounted approximately to 1,500 British and 10,250 Indian ranks.

In the meantime the threatening attitude of Turkey had made it necessary to take steps for the protection of the very important Abadan oil pipe-line in south-west Persia on the borders of Mesopotamia, and it was decided to dispatch a brigade of the 6th (Poona) Division (which had been mobilized in anticipation of further demands) to demonstrate at the head of the Persian Gulf, without, however, taking hostile action. This brigade embarked on the 16th of October and arrived at Bahrein—a British island in the Persian Gulf—on the 23rd. With the declaration of war against Turkey a week later, the brigade was ordered to take Fao, and a second brigade was placed under orders to support it. By the end of November the whole of the 6th Division had reached Mesopotamia. The strength of this advanced guard of the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force amounted approximately to 4,500 British and 12,000 Indian ranks.

The Government of India were further requested in the course of October to dispatch to Egypt a force of six infantry

[1] For the beginning of Imperial Service Troops see vol. i, pp. 113–17. The Imperial Service Troops which served in East Africa included a contingent from Kashmir, who did very well in the unsuccessful attack on Tanga.

brigades (including one composed of Imperial Service Troops) and one Imperial Service Cavalry Brigade. These troops, numbering approximately 1,500 British and 27,250 Indian ranks, disembarked in Egypt during November and December. A small Indian contingent, a half battalion of the 36th Sikhs then doing garrison duty in North China, also co-operated with the Japanese in the attack on the German naval base at Tsing-tao in North China.[1]

In addition to the organized forces dispatched to France, East Africa, Mesopotamia, and Egypt, 32 British infantry battalions and 20 batteries of artillery aggregating 35,000 British ranks were sent independently to England to facilitate the expansion of the Army at home,[2] and were gradually replaced by 35 Territorial battalions and 29 Territorial field batteries. The small residue of the pre-war British Regular garrison was concentrated in formations on the North-West Frontier, while the Territorial units, who had at that time much to learn as regards warfare under the novel conditions of a country like India, underwent a course of intensive training in the interior of India.

Thus, by the close of 1914, India was maintaining four overseas forces amounting in the aggregate to over 100,000 men of all ranks, and had in addition exchanged 35,500 of the best British Regular troops for an equivalent number of semi-trained Territorials with inferior armament and equipment. For a country with a population of 315,000,000 to send only 100,000 at the end of five months, and to provide practically

[1] See below, p. 433.

[2] These battalions and batteries formed the greater part of the 27th and 28th Divisions, which proceeded to France in December 1914 and January 1915 respectively, and of the 29th Division which distinguished itself so greatly at Gallipoli. The first four battalions to arrive from India were allotted to the 8th Division, which reached France early in November 1914. The importance of the arrival of these reinforcements can hardly be exaggerated.

This left the Regular element in the British garrison of India reduced to three regiments of cavalry (two of which, the 7th and 14th Hussars, went to Mesopotamia later), about a dozen batteries of R.F.A. with a few other artillery units, and nine battalions of infantry, of which the 2nd Royal West Kent was part of the 12th Indian Brigade, the first reinforcement sent to Mesopotamia, while the other battalions were in the divisions on the frontier. The Territorials who replaced the troops withdrawn consisted of the Wessex and Home Counties Divisions, who left England in the middle and at the end of October respectively, together with the infantry of the Second Line Wessex Division, new formations raised since the beginning of the war and originally intended as Reserve or Home Service units; these followed in December.

none of the overseas transport or naval escort, may not seem a very great achievement. But the difficulties and drawbacks already mentioned must be considered, and if India with all its numbers could supply only this small quota this must be remembered, that what there were of Indian troops came into action in the very nick of time—at a time when every single man trained for warfare was of inestimable value. Throughout other parts of the Empire thousands and millions of men were straining to be in the fighting line, but though the fate of the world was in the balance they could not be used for they were not trained. India could send only 100,000 men but she could send them when they were most wanted. It was in the critical days of the end of October and of early November that the Indian Corps took over the right of the line in France, setting free British troops to relieve exhausted battalions on the Ypres front and to beat off the crowning effort of the Prussian Guard on November 11th; and that India could send even this number was a great deal more than had ever before been expected, for it could not be done without risk. The frontier is always unsteady, and the entry of Turkey into the war might well occasion concern in the Mohammedan State of Afghanistan, among the fanatical and easily roused frontier tribes, and even among Mohammedans in India itself. The Germans, too, might be expected to—and actually did—attempt to stir up the people of India against the British. Against internal rising and external aggression the Government of India had necessarily to be on their guard; and with the stock of rifles reduced to a very low figure by demands from the field and by the transfer to the War Office of a large number which were under manufacture in England, and with the number of mobile guns reduced from 474 to 270, the risk that the Government took was considerable. At one critical moment, indeed, when the Regular British units had left and before the Territorial battalions had arrived, there were under 30,000 British troops in India. When these risks are considered, what India gave in the early days of the war was no mean contribution.

In 1915 the growing importance of the campaign in Mesopotamia involved a steadily increasing demand for men and material at a time when the armed forces of India had been reduced to a dangerously low level. From small beginnings

the campaign in Mesopotamia assumed a character of the greatest importance to India, since its reaction was felt all over Persia, and, indeed, throughout the East. Early in the year urgent representations from His Majesty's Government led to the increase of the force in Mesopotamia from one division to the strength of two divisions and one cavalry brigade. One infantry brigade [1] was obtained from Egypt, but the remainder of these additional troops were provided from India, and reached Basra by the end of March. Late in the autumn two more brigades were sent from India, and towards the close of the year the leading units of the Indian Army Corps from France began to arrive in the country, its release from France being made possible by the rapid expansion of the British Army. The provision of these additional formations from the depleted garrisons of India was a matter of grave concern, and was only made possible by the promise of His Majesty's Government to send a number of British Garrison Battalions from home for second-line duty in India. By the close of the year the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force had grown from the strength of a single division to over 50,000 fighting men.

It was not only from Mesopotamia that increased demands upon India came during 1915.[2] In addition to Mesopotamia contingents from India were engaged in France and Belgium (where the two cavalry divisions were still retained after the infantry had left), in Egypt, in Gallipoli,[3] in South and East Persia, in East Africa, in the Cameroons, in the Aden hinterland, in Somaliland, and on the North-West and North-East Frontiers of India, besides garrisons at several colonial stations.

The progress of events in German East Africa soon made it apparent that the Expeditionary Force in that quarter would continue to draw largely upon India for men and material. Some of the units which had suffered severely in the early stages of the campaign were withdrawn to India and replaced by fresh units, and four additional battalions were dispatched during the year. But the chief burden imposed by the East

[1] The 30th Brigade under Major-General Sir C. Melliss, V.C.

[2] See p. 246, below.

[3] The troops at Gallipoli came from those already in Egypt and their employment only involved an additional drain on India in as much as large drafts were required to fill the gaps made by the heavy losses. The force in Egypt also provided several reliefs for shattered battalions serving in France, five of which were withdrawn during the summer and replaced by fresh units.

African campaign at this period, and, indeed, throughout the war, was the replacement of wastage rather than the provision of complete units; in certain cases demands were received for draft reinforcements amounting to over 50 per cent. of establishment before the unit had been three months in the country.

It was this problem of finding sufficient drafts to keep the units in the field up to strength which was the main strain on the resources of India in 1915. It was not only from East Africa but from all the theatres of war that heavy and incessant demands were received. The insufficiency of the Reserve had soon been apparent, not only in numbers but in quality: many of the reinforcements sent to France at the end of 1914 proved to be physically quite unfit for the strain of trench warfare; they fell so far below the standards of training and discipline of the original force as to reduce the efficiency of the battalions to which they were posted. The problem of finding officers was even more acute. An Indian unit which had no longer at its head the British officers by whom it had been trained and taught, which had in their place officers who did not know the men they had to command, or speak their language, was very much below the value of the original units who had landed at Marseilles in October.[1] Even when the drafts took the shape of whole companies of 'linked' battalions, trained soldiers of good physique, there was some loss of cohesion, and the battalion from which they came was seriously depleted. Very early in the war, before the end of 1914, orders were issued for raising extra companies and double companies in various battalions serving in India in order to fill the gaps already caused by the demands for drafts and to provide for future requirements, and in the course of 1915 this plan was adopted on an extended scale. However, even this barely sufficed to keep pace with the needs of the battalions in the field, and nothing in the way of any expansion of the Indian Army was attempted. In March 1915 the formation of a

[1] The state to which some battalions were reduced may be illustrated by the composition of the 9th Bhopals when they were transferred to Egypt in June 1915: they had with them 11 Indian officers and 492 rank and file belonging to no less than ten other units, only a small proportion of whom came from their own 'linked' battalions. The 15th Sikhs were in as bad case or worse. This lack of homogeneity inevitably involved a loss of efficiency and the reputation of some of the finest regiments in the Indian Army had come to depend on a scratch collection of men from many units with which they had no connexion.

provisional second battalion for the 67th Punjabis was sanctioned, but this precedent was not followed up for some time ; up to the end of 1916 only eight such new battalions had been raised.

Throughout the year the situation on the North-West Frontier of India was somewhat unsettled as the result of hostile activities among the tribesmen, and operations became necessary in Baluchistan, the Tochi valley, the Mohmand border, Swat, Buner, and the Black Mountain, on a scale which involved the employment of the whole of the 1st (Peshawar) and part of the 2nd (Rawal Pindi) Divisions.

A coterie of disaffected Indians, acting as hostile agents and directing their operations from overseas, endeavoured—though with small success—to sow disaffection among the troops and to create internal disorder. A disquieting feature was a wave of unrest in the Punjab, which was, however, firmly suppressed and has in no way tarnished the record of the province as the most productive recruiting area in India. Repeated efforts were made under German guidance to ship arms to India via Batavia and Siam. The year was thus one of anxiety both within and on the borders of India, and regard for the internal security of India made it still more difficult to meet the demands upon the country from outside, though the steady improvement of the Territorial contingent from home and the addition to the Army in India of six Nepalese battalions—increased nine months later to ten—which the Nepal Government generously placed at the disposal of the Government of India for the period of the war were reassuring elements in the situation.

The demands for men and material from all these different quarters constantly threatened to outpace the ability of India to meet them, and the complexity of the problem which presented itself can be readily realized from the mere enumeration of the variety of theatres in which Indian troops were engaged during the year. It is important, again, to emphasize that whereas the pre-war policy of His Majesty's Government required of India that she should be prepared merely for a hill campaign beyond her frontiers, the general policy of the Empire on the outbreak of war dictated a concentration of effort towards the strengthening of our position in Europe and the North Sea. The energies of India had therefore been directed

towards this common object, and the decision of His Majesty's Government to develop the campaign in Mesopotamia far beyond the limits originally assigned to it presented a problem of great difficulty and involved a readjustment of the financial, commercial, and manufacturing resources of India. It must be remembered also that at this period the output of the United Kingdom was required almost exclusively to meet the demands of the British forces in Europe, and the various Indian contingents already enumerated were therefore dependent chiefly on India as their base of supply. The wide variety of climatic and other conditions under which these contingents were serving was in itself a source of extreme difficulty and taxed the resources of India to the utmost.

In 1916 the Mesopotamian campaign again made the chief demand upon India. In addition to the 3rd (Lahore) and the 7th (Meerut) Divisions which reached Basra early in the year, a reinforcement of five additional battalions was sent from India and three infantry brigades were mobilized to proceed if and when it should be found possible to replace them. On the other hand the whole burden of Mesopotamia was not thrown on India, for the 13th British Division in Egypt was ordered to proceed to Mesopotamia. When the disaster at Kut took place immediate steps had to be taken to reconstitute the fourteen Indian battalions which had been lost.[1] Steps were also taken to relieve with fresh troops from India some of the units which had been continuously on service since the beginning of the war and which had suffered severely in the relief operations. Three additional battalions were also sent from India for garrison duty on the lines of communication. On the other hand on the evacuation of Gallipoli and the transfer to Egypt of the whole Mediterranean Expeditionary Force the burden of defending Egypt was almost entirely removed from the shoulders of the Indian Army. Of the Indian units serving in Egypt some had been transferred to the Lahore and Meerut Divisions on their passage through the Canal, allowing tired battalions from France like the 39th Garhwalis to return to India; several more came back to India early in 1916, three went to East Africa, others to Aden and the Persian Gulf, leaving only a weak brigade of Indian Regulars in Egypt along with the Imperial Service Troops.

[1] Some were reconstituted in Mesopotamia itself, others at their depots in India.

At the request of the Persian Government a mission was sent to South Persia to restore and maintain order, and a force known as the South Persia Rifles was created, locally raised, but largely officered from India. Moreover, in conjunction with the Russians a small force was maintained in East Persia to frustrate the activities of hostile agents in the direction of Afghanistan and India.

The situation on the North-West Frontier gave less anxiety than in the previous year. A local disturbance in Baluchistan was easily suppressed. A strict blockade against the Mohmand tribes had to be instituted, but elsewhere the frontier remained quiet.

The arrival of sixteen Garrison Battalions from England set free sufficient Territorial and Indian battalions to add a much-needed division to the field army and greatly facilitated the task of reinforcing British units overseas.

## 1917

During 1917 the series of operations which culminated in the capture of Baghdad made the chief demand upon Indian resources. General Maude's brilliant successes were not achieved without considerable casualties and big drafts were required. However, the expansion of the Indian Army which General Sir Charles Monro had set on foot on taking over command in India was now bearing fruit,[1] and not only were ample drafts forthcoming but a large number of additional battalions and an extra cavalry regiment could be dispatched to Mesopotamia. It even proved possible in the autumn to organize one new division in Mesopotamia and another in India, and these, the 17th and 18th Indian Divisions, set free for transfer to Palestine to reinforce General Allenby the Lahore and Meerut Divisions who moved thither early in 1918. An additional cavalry brigade was also provided together with several units for service on the lines of communication.

An active defence had to be maintained at Aden during the year. In South and East Persia several minor operations were undertaken against raiders, robber bands, and gun-runners, while on the North-West Frontier of India operations lasting from March to August had to be undertaken against the Mahsuds in Waziristan. It was something therefore to set

[1] See Appendix to this Chapter.

off against all these drains on India's resources that, with the expulsion of von Lettow Vorbeck from German East Africa,[1] the end was in sight for the Indian units hitherto serving in that country.

## 1918

This year was the climax of the war, and in 1918 the severest demand was made upon India. The great German offensive strained the whole Empire to the utmost, and on April 2nd the Prime Minister telegraphed to the Viceroy calling upon the Government and people of India to redouble their efforts. 'The attempt of the enemy in the West', he said, 'is being checked, but if we are to prevent the menace spreading to the East and gradually engulfing the world, every lover of freedom and law must play his part.' 'India must equip itself on an even greater scale than at present', he added, 'to be the bulwark which will save Asia from the tide of oppression and disorder which it is the object of the enemy to achieve.'

It involved a further and larger demand for men than had hitherto been contemplated. Not only did it become necessary to increase the armies in India and overseas, but the extreme urgency of concentrating British man-power on the Western Front in France threw upon India the additional obligation of replacing the British soldier wherever he could be spared.

Palestine now became what Mesopotamia had hitherto been, the chief theatre in which Indian troops were employed and the main drain on India's man-power. Not only were the Lahore and Meerut Divisions transferred from General Marshall's command to General Allenby's, but three of the British divisions already in Palestine were 'Indianized' by the substitution of three Indian battalions for British in their infantry brigades and of sappers and miners for their Field Companies (R.E.), while Indians were extensively employed in their Divisional Ammunition Columns and in their transport and medical services. Another division, the 75th, in which a few Indian battalions had been included from its first organization in 1917, was wholly 'Indianized', and the Indian cavalry hitherto in France replaced the bulk of the Yeomanry units in the Desert Mounted Corps; large reinforcements were thus set free to strengthen the armies in France. This was rendered

[1] See vol. iv, p. 197.

possible by the fact that before this date most Indian regiments had raised second, and in some cases third and fourth, battalions, and the process was carried further by drafting companies from battalions already in Mesopotamia and Palestine and grouping them in fours to form new battalions which were assigned numbers from 150 upwards. The battalions from which the companies had been taken were brought up to strength with recruits from India. Later in the year it proved possible to withdraw from Mesopotamia a dozen battalions of Indian infantry for service at Salonika to replace British infantry who had been moved to France, but no Indian battalion reached Salonika in time to share in the dramatic defeat of the Bulgarians or to receive their surrender, though the majority of these battalions were destined to do important work in the period following the Armistice as part of the 'Army of the Black Sea' in occupation of the Caucasus and Constantinople.

The hostility of the Khans of the Bushire hinterland in South Persia involved the employment of over 20,000 fighting men and followers. The defection of Russia and the consequent Turco-German attempt to move eastward across the Caspian Sea to spread the war in the direction of the Indian frontier and to introduce complications in Afghanistan imposed a still further strain on India; and the maintenance of troops on the Caspian necessitated road construction together with the provision of mechanical transport on a large scale in North-West Persia involving large demands on Indian resources. On the other hand the situation in East Africa was such that it could now be left in charge of African soldiers, mainly the greatly multiplied King's African Rifles, and the last of the Indian contingent was withdrawn early in the year.

The withdrawal of the Russians necessitated the extension of the cordon of troops in East Persia to Meshed, and eventually to the Trans-Caspian Railway at 'Ashqabad.

On the North-West Frontier of India the recalcitrancy of the Marri tribes made it necessary to undertake important operations against them in February, March, and April.

These, in brief, were the demands which the prosecution of the war made upon India. How did India respond to the call? The Army in India was, we have seen, in no sense maintained

for meeting external obligations of an Imperial character. The standard of the Indian military establishment was that required for the defence of India's own frontiers. In consequence all the equipment, all the transport, all the supplies were based upon that standard. Yet now India was called upon not merely to safeguard her own frontiers but also to render assistance to the Empire in widely remote theatres of war. How did she rise to this great occasion?

From the very first day the policy of the Government of India was to give readily to the Home Government of everything whether troops or war material. The total numbers of men, animals, and stores dispatched from Indian ports during the war were:

| | |
|---|---|
| Personnel . . . . | 1,302,394 |
| Animals . . . . | 172,815 |
| Supplies and stores . . | 3,691,836 tons |

'As regards supplies, India has been responsible throughout the war for the provision either from India itself or from overseas of everything required for the troops in Mesopotamia both British and Indian, though the assistance of the War Office had to be obtained in procuring certain special items. India has also provided all food-stuffs demanded for the Indian troops serving in East Africa, Egypt, France, and Salonika. Before the war the only troops in India rationed by the State were the British garrison of 75,000 men (for the Indian soldier was fed at his own expense under regimental arrangements); towards the close of the war India was rationing about one million men, besides making large shipments of food-stuffs to assist allied troops and civilians in the Eastern Mediterranean.'

The chief additions to the Army in India were 7 British heavy batteries, 46½ Indian cavalry squadrons, 14 Indian mountain batteries, 56 'Sappers and Miners' units, 31 signal units, and 156½ infantry battalions. This represented an increase of 30 per cent. for Indian cavalry squadrons, 117 per cent. for mountain batteries, and 113 per cent. for infantry battalions, while the Sappers and Miners were more than doubled. Moreover, as the establishment of Indian infantry battalions serving overseas was raised from 826 to 1,030, the increase per cent. in personnel was considerably in excess of the increase per cent. in units.

Compared with the expansion of the British Army these figures might seem to be nothing very remarkable, but it should be remembered that the result was achieved by voluntary recruiting alone, without any resort to compulsion, that included in India's vast but variegated population are many races of little value from a military point of view, that the races with martial traditions are limited in numbers, above all that to the bulk of the population of India the war was a far distant thing, hard to realize, harder to appreciate in its meaning for India. When these things are borne in mind India's effort on behalf of the Empire stands out in its true perspective as a great achievement and a factor of immense importance in the war. The parts played by the Punjab, which out of its 20,000,000 inhabitants contributed nearly 500,000 combatants, by Nepal which produced over 50,000 fighting men out of a population of 3,000,000, and by Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier Province which sent over 30,000 recruits from the same population as Nepal, are particularly noticeable. His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught, speaking at Rawalpindi in February 1921, said very truly, 'The achievement of the Punjab was remarkable. Even before the war the Punjab had a name familiar in the military annals of the Empire. During the war the name became a household word, and not only on account of the number of men who joined the colours but also on account of the splendid fighting qualities displayed.' Again, when laying the foundation stone of the All India War Memorial at Delhi and speaking of his past experience of the Indian Army, he said, 'It was an Army of great traditions and splendid discipline, but little did I dream in those days to what still more distant fields the Indian Army would be called or to what immense expansion that great organization would be brought by the strong impulse of loyalty and patriotism'. The record of the Indian Army between August 1914 and November 1918 provides ample justification for this high praise.

Including troops serving in India itself, the net total of cavalry squadrons and infantry battalions which were Indian units and supplied by India up to the date of the signing of the Armistice was :

241 Indian squadrons (including 39 squadrons of Imperial Service Cavalry).

289½ Indian battalions (including 9 battalions of Imperial Service Infantry and excluding 14 Indian battalions lost at Kut).

Other combatant units formed in India during the war were :

10 special sections of field artillery for garrison duty in India.
59 emergency companies of Indian infantry.
76½ special companies of Indian infantry.
15½ companies of ex-Sepoys for garrison duty in India.
16 armoured motor batteries.
19 British and 3 Indian machine-gun companies.
3 machine-gun squadrons.

The maintenance of all these various units at war establishment during a long war often involved the provision of draft reinforcements amounting in the aggregate to more than the original strength of the unit.

The provision of British officers for Indian units was especially difficult. The small British community in India being engaged for the most part in Government service or in industries of national importance offered a very limited scope as a source of recruitment.

Further, 'the pre-war organization of the Army in India, having been based on the requirements of a frontier campaign only had made no provision . . . for a reserve of officers to replace casualties on a large scale or to fill the junior commissioned ranks of newly raised units.' The first step taken was to increase the Indian Army Reserve, the Reserve of British Officers for the Indian Army numbering only forty in August 1914, and this source of recruitment gradually developed until, by the end of October 1918, over 5,300 commissions had been given. Cadet colleges for Regular officers for the Indian Army were opened at Quetta and Wellington, 'and, by arrangement with the War Office, a large number of officers were transferred to the Indian Army on probation from the Special Reserve and Territorial Force [1] or granted temporary commissions from the ranks of British units. The number of British officers added to the Indian Army and Indian Army Reserve

[1] A very large number was taken from the Territorial Force units in India. These units which arrived in India in the autumn of 1914 contained quite a large proportion of men fully up to or above the standard to which the supply of officer material had come down.

. . . was nearly four times the number on the strength of the Indian Army at the outbreak of the war.' The total number of commissions granted was 9,583, and the total number of British officers sent overseas from India, including both British and Indian Services, was 23,040.

Of Indians of other ranks than officers there were recruited in India during the war 826,868 combatants and 445,592 non-combatants, including 24,368 combatants and 4,803 non-combatants recruited for Imperial Service Units. Of the combatants 136,126 were Punjabi Musalmans, 88,925 were Sikhs, 55,589 were Gurkhas, 49,086 were Rajputs, 40,272 were Jats, and 36,353 were Hindustani Musalmans. 349,688 combatant recruits were enlisted in the Punjab, 163,578 in the United Provinces, and only 7,117 in Bengal.

'An important contribution made by India was the provision of labour for various theatres of war, especially France and Mesopotamia. A wide variety of classes were enlisted for this purpose, many of whom had never before been used in the Army, either as combatants or non-combatants.' There were sent to France 54 labour corps, each of a strength of 1,150, and 6 syce (groom) companies, each of a strength of 210. To Mesopotamia were sent 19 labour corps, 6 syce companies, and 12 porter corps. Indian labour was also supplied to other theatres of war.

The provision of material on the vast scale demanded by the war was a difficult matter for India. India is essentially an agricultural country. Industries are only just beginning to develop. Labour of the quality required in the production of war material hardly exists outside the trained personnel of the ordnance factories, two or three other Government establishments, and a few private engineering firms. Moreover, the average Indian workman is of a low educational standard and possesses only a primitive knowledge of his craft. So he requires a long period of training before he can be counted on to produce any appreciable increase in output. Nor has he any ambition to acquire a knowledge of modern workshop methods and practices. Labour of this quality when employed on such important work as the manufacture of modern war material requires a high proportion of expert European supervision, and this supervision is hard to obtain in India. Further, India produces none of the machinery and few of the tools

and other equipment of a modern workshop. In this respect, as also in the provision of much of the raw material required, she is dependent on outside assistance. For these reasons, development in the manufacture of war stores requiring a high standard of reliability and accuracy of workmanship must necessarily be slow.

'The munition-making resources of the country were first co-ordinated in July 1915 by the Railway Board, which employed a special staff to supervise and develop output. In this way it was possible to make the best use of existing railway workshops, in which a considerable quantity of shell cases were manufactured, as well as a variety of other articles which could not be produced by the Ordnance and other Government factories.' Some efforts were made to utilize men of technical experience who happened to be serving in the ranks of Territorial battalions. The Railway Board also undertook to supply coal to all Railways, Military Services, Overseas Forces, Marine and Royal Navy. 'It was soon found that supply was likely to be in defect of demand, and that powers must be taken by Statute to requisition coal for purposes of the war and to control the distribution of coal for public consumption after the demand for immediate war and quasi-war services had been met. These increased rapidly and it was necessary, therefore, to set up a close control over output as well as consumption.' A Coal Controller was appointed and a system of requisitioning and rationing was introduced.

On the 1st of March 1917 the Indian Munitions Board was created as a temporary Department of the Government of India with the object of devoting especial attention to the control and development of Indian resources with particular reference to war requirements. Its chief functions were to limit and co-ordinate demands for articles not manufactured or produced in India, to apply the manufacturing resources of India to war purposes, thereby reducing demands on shipping, and to organize efficient methods of supplying the forces in the field with the miscellaneous engineering plant and stores required by them.

This Munitions Board concerned itself with the supply of ordnance, hides and leather, railway track, rolling stock and plant, clothing, textiles, boots, tents, jute goods, river-craft, timber, miscellaneous engineering plant and stores; and also

with the 'scrutiny of priority applications for assistance in obtaining goods from the United Kingdom and the United States of America, scrutiny of Government indents on the India Office, control of export of certain materials, [and] control of the distribution of the products of the Indian iron and steel works'.

In all, there were produced in India during the war 145,758 rifles (new and converted), 551,000,000 rifle cartridges, 176 guns, and 1,360,968 shells of every kind.

The Indian tanning industry made an important contribution towards the war by the supply of rough-tanned cow-hides from Madras and Bombay. These 'East India kips' were very largely utilized in the manufacture of upper leather for army boots. In addition to supplies of tanned hides India also furnished large quantities of raw hides to the War Office and to the Italian Government.

India exported to Mesopotamia, East Africa, Aden, and South Persia 1,855 miles of railway track (including 555 miles for Egypt), 229 locomotives, 5,489 vehicles, 13,073 feet of bridging material.

'As the Army requirements of woollen and worsted goods under war conditions exceeded the maximum capacity of the five existing woollen mills in India, it was necessary to import a certain proportion of these materials from home. But the Indian mills were utilized to their utmost, all five having been under engagement to supply the whole of their output to the Board, and to work both day and night. In addition, arrangements were made to develop the supply of blankets from jails and from groups of hand-weavers.'

'The whole of Government's requirements of cotton goods, with the exception of mosquito netting and cotton sewing-thread, were supplied from the products of Indian manufactures.'

'The demand for water transport in the Eastern theatres of war became so heavy that, in 1916, the Government of India found it necessary to form a special agency to organize the work of construction.' Among the craft supplied were 220 barges, 5 stern-wheel tugs, 2 hospital stern-wheelers, 20 motor launches, 22 marine motors, and 110 pontoons.

228,076 tons of timber were supplied. 'Every effort was made to substitute indigenous timber for foreign supplies in

order to reduce the demand on shipping to a minimum and to encourage the use of the locally grown article.' The greater part of the timber supplied was in the form of sawn beams, planks, and scantlings, and much difficulty arose owing to the very limited number of saw mills and the impossibility of importing additional plant.

An enormous amount of miscellaneous engineering plant and stores was also supplied, including equipment for the docks and workshops which were constructed in Mesopotamia and East Africa.

The only works producing steel in India were the Tata iron and steel works at Sakchi in Bengal. Over the output of their steel, Government, with the ready consent of the management, exercised complete control. The principal portion of the steel output took the form of rails and fastenings for railway work. From these works 985 track miles of railway material were supplied and in addition large quantities of rolled steel sections.

A floating workshop for use at Basra was constructed at Calcutta. A yard capable of building twenty large river-craft at a time was laid down at Karachi. At the Calcutta yard steel barges and two large floating bridges were constructed. Bombay constructed barges both in steel and in wood.

The Central Research Institute at Karachi enormously increased their issue of vaccines and sera. The yearly issue during the war averaged 1,514,551 cubic centimetres as against 18,423, the average of the two years prior to the war. This included typhoid vaccine, T.A.B. vaccine, cholera, plague, and other vaccines.

India also contributed 7 bacteriological laboratories, 1 malaria laboratory, 43 sets of X-ray apparatus, and 6 hospital river-boats. Six hospital ships were also equipped and manned in India, one of which, the *Loyalty*, was equipped and maintained by ruling chiefs. The hospital accommodation provided in India comprised 660 beds for British officers, 20,790 beds for British rank and file, 31,820 beds for Indian rank and file.

A Central Mechanical Transport Stores Depot was formed at Rawalpindi, and to it were affiliated the purchasing agencies for procuring available mechanical transport stores in India. Through these agencies large quantities of spare parts, tyres, and mechanical transport material generally, were purchased

from markets in India and dispatched for the various forces overseas. The principal mechanical transport vehicles sent overseas were 72 motor lorries, 102 motor cars, 117 motor cycles, 675 motor vans, 72 motor ambulances, 8 armoured cars, and 60 rail tractors.

The approximate value of the equipment and supplies sent overseas during the war was £34,408,000. Some of the more important items of supply were, in tons: rice, 219,889; flour, 133,025; atta (coarse flour), 322,587; grain for animals (i. e. barley, oats, and bran), 545,788; hay and chopped straw, 771,737; ghi (clarified butter), 26;214; sugar, 35,602; tea, 6,502; firewood, 603,223.

Two hundred and twenty-nine vessels were chartered. For the river flotilla in Mesopotamia 156 steamers, 271 launches, and 531 barges were provided or arranged for. Eighty-five British war vessels were repaired and refitted at Bombay, which formed an important depot.

India was precluded by Act of Parliament from paying for military operations carried on beyond its external frontiers by forces charged upon the revenues of India. But at the first meeting of the Imperial Legislative Council of India held after the outbreak of war, a resolution was unanimously passed on the motion of an Indian non-official member to the effect that the people of India, in addition to the military assistance being offered to the Empire, would wish to share in the heavy financial burden imposed by the war on the United Kingdom. The Viceroy, in forwarding the resolution to the Secretary of State, pointed out that India was bound to suffer financially through the falling off of customs and railway receipts, could ordinarily have asked the Home Government to bear the whole cost of the Expeditionary Force, and could then have effected counter-savings. But this was not in accordance with the wishes of the people and the Government of India. He therefore proposed that India should accept such portion of the cost of the force as would have fallen upon India had the troops remained in the country.

This proposal was accepted by His Majesty's Government and resolutions were passed by both Houses of Parliament permitting the payment of the contribution from Indian resources. The ordinary pay and other ordinary charges of any troops dispatched as well as the ordinary charges of any

vessels belonging to the Government of India that might be employed should be chargeable to the revenues of the Government of India.

The net amount which was paid under these resolutions was £26·4 millions, but in addition the Government of India, with the general assent of the Imperial Legislative Council, proposed to offer His Majesty's Government a lump sum of £100 millions (rather more than a year's pre-war revenue) as a special contribution by India towards the expenses of the war. £78 millions were raised in India for this purpose by war loans, and as regards the balance the Government of India took over the liability for interest on an equivalent amount of the British Government war loan.

Other contributions towards the expenses of the war were made and the total net contribution from Indian revenues towards the cost of the war amounted to about £160 millions.

This, in summary, is how India translated into effective action her original determination to unite with the rest of the Empire in resisting the German attack upon the freedom of the world. The following chapters will record the part which Indian troops took in the actual fighting that after four terrible years of conflict ended in the complete overthrow of Germany and her allies.

## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER III

### THE EXPANSION OF THE INDIAN ARMY [1]

*By C. T. Atkinson*

As already stated (p. 184) the first increase in the pre-war establishment of the Indian Army took the form of raising additional companies in some of the battalions 'linked' with those already on active service, but this was rather an expedient for meeting the unexpectedly heavy wastage of the war and merely served to keep existing units up to strength. Only one new battalion was added to the Indian Army in the course

[1] This Appendix has been contributed by Mr. C. T. Atkinson, who has also, with Sir Francis Younghusband's consent, supplemented the military details in the various chapters of the narrative.

SIR CHARLES MONRO

of the first twelve months of war, a provisional battalion of the 67th Punjabis being put on the establishment in March 1915 as the 2/67th Punjabis. Not till December 1915 was another new unit formed, when a second battalion was added to the 123rd Outram's Rifles, and the war had lasted over two years before a wing of the 124th Baluchis, then in garrison at Bushire, was formed into a separate new battalion, the head-quarter wing being also recruited up to full strength. Up to that time, indeed, recruiting, though exceeding both anticipations and previous records, had hardly been sufficient to allow of any considerable expansion of the Indian Army : it had replenished the gaps in the ranks made by the heavy casualties in France, Gallipoli, and Mesopotamia, had allowed the reconstruction after the fall of Kut of the Indian battalions of the garrison, and had provided a good supply of drafts so that at the end of 1916 General Maude could start his great campaign for the recapture of Kut with his Indian battalions well up to strength and full of well-trained men. But at the end of 1916 India had not got on active service very much more than the equivalent of the Indian Expeditionary Forces put into the field by the end of 1914.

It is from the autumn of 1916, when General Sir Charles Monro arrived in India, that the development of a new system of recruiting, the consequent expansion of the Indian Army, and the great increase in India's share of the Empire's burden should be dated. A Central Recruiting Board was set up, the assistance of civil departments and Indian gentlemen of local influence or military connexions was invoked, modifications in terms of service were adopted, rates of pay and pensions were increased. The old system of recruiting men according to 'classes', by which battalions or companies were formed exclusively from men of one of the regular military classes,[1] was replaced by a territorial system under which any recruiting officer enrolled men of any class and not from one special class only. Further, new or little-recruited 'classes' like the Ahirs, Gujars, and Gaur Brahmins of the south-east of the Punjab were encouraged to enlist. Among other new sources of recruits the Kachins and Chins of Burma were tapped with excellent results, a 70th Burma Rifles coming into existence in

[1] Thus a Frontier Force Rifle regiment might consist of one company of Sikhs, one of Punjabi Mohammedans, one of Dogras and one of Afridis.

September 1917 and being increased in less than a year to a regiment of four battalions, which did exceptionally good service in suppressing the troublesome Moplah rising of 1921 and was retained (as the 20th Burma Regiment) when the majority of the newly raised units were disbanded and even after not a few old regiments disappeared in the organization of 1923. In the same way a 50th Kumaon Rifles, originally raised as a 4th Battalion of the 39th Garhwalis, represented another successful experiment in extending the recruiting area, though a Punjabi Christian battalion brought into the Line as the 71st Punjabis in October 1917, and a Mahar battalion raised (as the 111th Mahars) at the same time did not survive the reductions after the war.

As a result of these new methods the supply of recruits increased enormously. In 1917 nearly as many recruits were taken as had come in up to the end of 1916, and in consequence the number of additional battalions rose to over 50 before the end of the year. It was this which made it possible to form the 17th and 18th Indian Divisions for service in Mesopotamia, to transfer the Lahore and Meerut Divisions to Palestine, and to increase the small Indian contingent in Egypt. Several additional companies were at the same time added to each of the three regiments of Sappers and Miners and additional batteries of mountain artillery were raised. Then with the crisis in France in March 1918 the call on India was increased and additional drafts on the man-power of India did much to keep the British Armies in France up to strength indirectly, if not as in 1914 by the dispatch of Indian units to that country. The expansion of the Indian Army by another 50 battalions between March and May 1918 allowed of the 'Indianization' of the bulk of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force. This time not only were 2nd Battalions added to some twenty and more existing regiments,[1] but both in Egypt and in Mesopotamia new regiments were formed by drafting companies from existing battalions and grouping them in fours to form new battalions. The companies drafted were replaced by recruits and the new battalions grouped in regiments by threes, receiving numbers from 150 to 156.[2] Throughout the rest of 1918 the process

[1] In the end all but 40 of the pre-war units raised a new battalion and several raised two or even three.

[2] The highest numbered unit in existence in 1914 was the 130th Baluchis (Jacob's Rifles).

of raising additional battalions went forward. In July a two battalion 131st (United Provinces Police) Regiment was raised, followed by several other local units such as 1/140th Patiala Regiment, 1/141st Bikaner Regiment.[1] In August three new cavalry regiments were formed, followed by four more in October, and corresponding increases were made in the mountain artillery and Sappers and Miners, the enlistment of over 300,000 recruits in the course of 1918 providing ample material for this expansion. The majority of these new units never came into action, though the army which General Allenby commanded in September 1918 contained nearly twenty battalions not in existence before the war, including over half a dozen battalions of the new series from 150 onwards, while several others were actively engaged in Mesopotamia; but the importance of the great increase in the Indian Army which General Monro had inaugurated and successfully carried through is not to be measured by the actual fighting done by the additional units. Their existence had made it possible to reinforce Picardy from Palestine and yet maintain the British forces facing the Turk at a strength sufficient to drive him out of the war. Had not the Bulgarians been so prompt to quit the sinking ship Indian units would have had a chance of taking an effective part in the operations in Macedonia, and at the end of the war India was the one portion of the British Empire whose effective man-power was still increasing. When the difficulties not only of recruiting, raising, and equipping so largely augmented an army, but of providing it with British officers, are taken into consideration, the expansion of the Indian Army in the years 1917 and 1918 will be seen to rank high among great administrative achievements, to redound greatly to the credit of those who conceived it and carried it out, and to stand comparison not only with what the Dominions accomplished in the way of improvising their contingents but with the Mother Country's effort in raising, training, and equipping the 'New Armies'.

[1] These were not Imperial Service troops.

# CHAPTER IV

## OPERATIONS IN FRANCE, 1914

WHETHER the military forces of the British Empire should concentrate in France, or whether we should take advantage of our naval position and sea-power to land forces in other parts of Europe and attack Austria or other of Germany's allies as they declared themselves, was one of the many momentous questions which had to be decided after the first great onrush of the Germans had been thrown back at the Marne. Some were said to be in favour of a landing at Salonika and an advance into Serbia, both to succour that gallant little country and to discourage Bulgaria, Rumania, Greece, and Turkey from entering the war against us. It was an attractive plan on paper, but the Germanic Powers, occupying a central position, would have been able to move troops to meet the British forces, and in the meanwhile France herself was in dire need of all the help we could afford her. Lord Kitchener was emphatically in favour of keeping the small British forces in closest co-operation with the French while the full military resources of the Empire were being gradually developed. Only thus, he believed, could France be secured; and only thus could be preserved the precious nucleus of the mighty British Imperial Force of the future. At all costs, he held, must the French and British keep together. This view was adopted by the Government and the great decision was made in September that Indian troops—that is Indian Divisions in which roughly one-third are British—should proceed to France.

Action had already been taken with a view to moving Indian troops, at least to Egypt. The Lahore (3rd) Division and the Meerut (7th) Division had received orders to mobilize on August 8th, 1914. On August 24th the former had embarked at Karachi and disembarked at Suez on September 9th to 15th. But with the exception of one brigade it very shortly re-embarked and arrived at Marseilles on September 26th. The

Meerut Division embarked at Karachi on September 21st and likewise was ordered—while at sea—to go on to France.

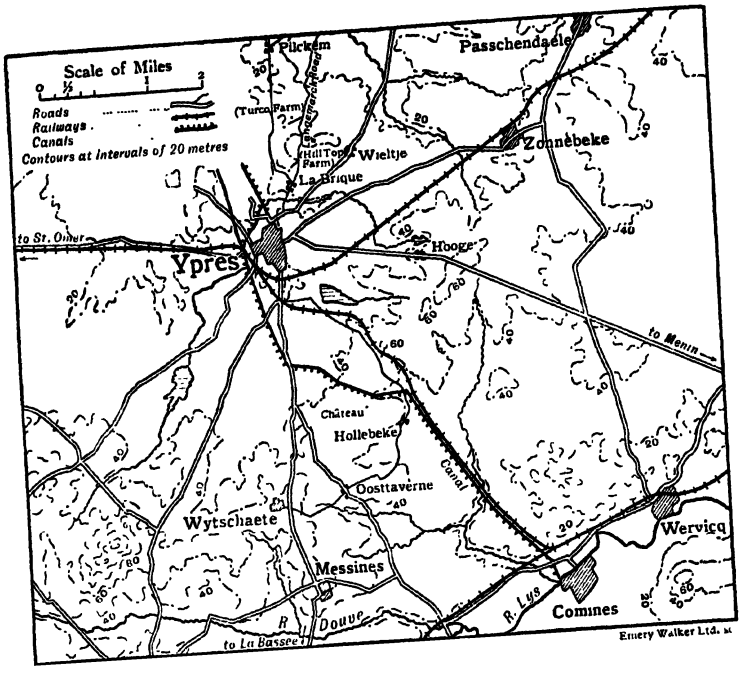
The enthusiasm of the Indian troops at thus being sent to France was unbounded. In the South African war no Indian regiments had been employed—though British regiments had been sent from India and reached Natal at a highly critical juncture when the main forces from England had not yet landed in South Africa. Indians were keenly disappointed at losing that opportunity of service. They were now correspondingly elated at being thought fit to fight in Europe itself against the most powerful military nation in the world. They were also eager to see the fabulous [1] Europe of which they had heard so much but which few of them had ever visited. So they arrived at Marseilles in the highest spirits.

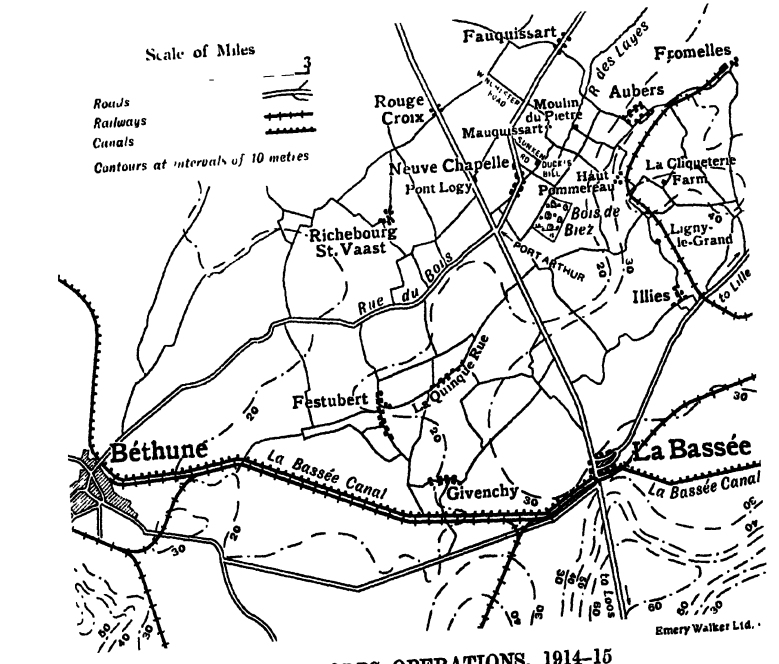
There a magnificent reception awaited them. The French were no less glad to see them than they were to see the French. It was a brilliant early autumn day as the great liners filled with Indian troops steamed majestically into the harbour. Thousands and thousands of French and African troops from across the Mediterranean had also landed there; and the quays were packed with motley crowds. But there was something strangely significant in the arrival of these troops from distant India coming to fight in France—coming to fight against the common enemy which threatened France and Britain and India alike. The sensitive French were thrilled with emotion. In the south of France they had doubtless heard of the British Expeditionary Force, but they had necessarily seen nothing of it and they were heartened by this tangible evidence that they were not being left to fight alone. They thronged in multitudes to the Indian camp, and at stations on the way up to the front the kindest reception was given to the troops.

And here may be a fitting place to record that the Indians by their soldierly bearing, their dignity and their innate courtesy and good manners so characteristic of Orientals, made a particularly favourable impression on the French people during their stay in France. The French are peculiarly appreciative of the graces of life and the Indians had that in their manners which especially appealed to them.

So far all was warmth and sunshine and good cheer, but now strain and suffering to the very limit of endurance was to come.

[1] See vol. i, p. 36.




INDIAN CORPS OPERATIONS, 1914–15

Sir James Willcocks the Commander of the Indian Corps landed at Marseilles on September 30th and on October 3rd reported himself to Sir John French. Antwerp had not then fallen, and great hopes were entertained of the Russians who were advancing through Galicia and would, it was expected, draw off many German divisions from France and Belgium. But before the end of October all such hopes had vanished. A German attack of the most weighty and determined character had developed; and the whole British Army was in peril of being driven into the sea.

Antwerp fell on October 9th. The Germans far from weakening their line were steadily reinforcing it and were concentrating for a mighty thrust at Calais and the Channel ports. The French with the aid of the small, though efficient, British Army had been able to throw back the great German lunge at Paris. But they had scarcely strength by themselves to maintain the whole long line from Switzerland to the English Channel, and the brunt of the German attack on the Channel ports would fall upon the little British Army which had already gone through the fearful strain of the retreat from Mons. Upon these devoted troops a terrific storm was now gathering and it was in these circumstances that the Indian Corps appeared upon the scene. The Lahore Division detrained round Arques and Blendecques on October 20th and started to march to the fighting area next day.

The Allies were then holding Ypres and Messines, but the Germans held Lille and the town of La Bassée to the south west. The Ist Corps, commanded by Sir Douglas Haig, was trying to push forward north-east of Ypres but was encountering increasing opposition. The IVth Corps (Sir H. Rawlinson) due east of Ypres was already heavily engaged and was hard put to it to hold on. The cavalry under General Allenby were between the right of the IVth Corps and the river Douve, also unable to get forward, and on their right the IIIrd (General Pulteney) and the IInd Corps commanded by Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, were opposing the Germans west of Lille. Not only had the Allied advance on Lille been brought to a standstill but the Germans had passed from the defensive to the offensive and were superior to the Allies alike in numbers of men and in weight of artillery. Since October 20th Smith-Dorrien and Pulteney had been carrying on a most gallant

fight against very superior numbers and it was to support the IInd Corps that the first Indian troops to arrive—the Lahore Division under Major-General Watkis—were destined. But actually the first troops from India to be engaged came into action in support of General Allenby's cavalry, for the Connaught Rangers, the 57th Rifles, and the 129th Baluchis were pushed up to the Messines ridge in the course of October 22nd. The 57th Rifles came into the fighting line on that same evening and actually repulsed a small German attack, while the Baluchis took over an outpost line between Hollebeke and Oosttaverne next morning. Four days later, on the 26th of October, they were engaged in an attack from Wytschaete upon the German position and there had experience of the depressing conditions under which fighting had to be carried on—conditions of cold, of rain, and mud, of imperfect and water-logged trenches, trying enough for British troops but far more trying for men accustomed to a sunny climate and only just arrived from the heat of India.

Indian regiments were only two-thirds of the Indian Corps; the Indian Corps was only one of the five corps of the then British Army in France and the British Army was only a small portion of the whole line of defence. But the point to note is that these Indian troops had arrived at the most critical moment.

No very definite results were obtained from the fighting on the 26th. The 129th Baluchis advanced quite close to the German trenches, but had to be recalled as they could not be supported. In the three following days the enemy contented themselves with bombarding the British position, but on October 30th the storm broke in all its fury and this day and more particularly the two following were, so far as the British Army was concerned, the most critical perhaps of the whole war. Roughly speaking, seven corps of the Allied armies were opposing twelve German corps, whilst the enemy enjoyed enormous artillery superiority both numerically and in calibre. The Allied line was very very thin and, if it broke, the enemy would be at Calais commanding the English Channel with their guns and the little British Army, from which the Great British Army of the future was to grow, would be crushed out of existence.

The enemy bombarded our positions round Ypres with great

violence. Our weak trenches were hammered with heavy shells and practically obliterated. At the same time the attack was pressed home by overwhelming masses of infantry. The Cavalry Corps (to which the 129th Baluchis and the 57th Wilde's Rifles were attached) became so weak numerically that retirement was inevitable.

But still what Lord French calls 'the thin and straggling line of tired out British soldiers which stood between the Empire and its practical ruin as an independent first-class Power' was maintained. The enemy had been gradually reinforced till they had reached about double our number. Seven British infantry divisions and three cavalry divisions were extended on a front of from 25 to 26 miles. The line of defence was stretched, out of sheer necessity, far beyond its natural and normal power of defence. But though bent it remained unbroken.

The worst day of all was October 31st. Allenby's Cavalry Corps—fighting on foot—had to hold the Wytschaete–Messines Ridge, against the determined attack of 2½ German corps. It was the centre of the line and had it given way disaster would have befallen the entire left wing of the Allies. It was stated that the German Emperor himself was present in this part of the front and captured correspondence showed that he regarded the success of the attack now being made on Ypres to be of vital importance to the issue of the war. Haig's corps immediately in front of Ypres was being frightfully pressed. At one point a break had been made and disaster was imminent till by extraordinary resource and bravery the line was restored.

It is not necessary to describe what took place on the whole battle front but only to single out the part played by Indian troops in this tremendous drama. In the early hours of October 31st, after having been heavily bombarded, Messines was attacked by a strong force of German infantry. The Indian troops were exhausted—as were all the troops engaged, it was impossible to relieve or reinforce them, and the Germans swarmed into the trenches of the 57th Wilde's Rifles. Most of the British officers were killed or wounded, but the remnant and the Indian officers fought stubbornly on, one company making a most gallant counter-attack to extricate another which was in special trouble, and eventually they effected

a retirement before nightfall to Messines itself. Sikhs from the plains of the Punjab, Afridis from the Afghan border, Dogras from the foot-hills of the Himalaya, fighting together under British leadership here in distant France had valiantly done their part in maintaining the attenuated line. Support by British troops was of course needed, but strange as the surroundings were to Indian soldiers and unaccustomed as they were to this terrific form of fighting they also helped to support the British troops and they too can claim a share in the eventual victory. So also may the 129th Baluchis who were holding a wood and covering a chateau near Hollebeke and who on the morning of November 1st attacked and captured a farm. The first Victoria Cross credited to Indian soldiers in the war was won on the 31st of October by Sepoy Khudadad of the 129th Baluchis.[1] This gallant man was the only survivor of the team of one of the machine guns who went on fighting their gun to the last in face of overwhelming odds: finally the Germans rushed it and bayoneted the whole team, not before it had inflicted heavy losses upon them. Sepoy Khudadad, though so badly wounded as to be left for dead, managed in the end to reach a place of safety.

Having thus contributed to the maintenance of our position about Ypres at the very moment when it was most seriously threatened these two Indian battalions were moved south[2] to rejoin the main body of the Indian Corps who had relieved Smith-Dorrien's Corps near La Bassée. To the movements and activities of this Corps it is now necessary to turn attention.

The Germans opposed by our IInd Corps, Smith-Dorrien's, had been driven back by him almost from Béthune to the Aubers Ridge, but had here checked his advance and all his efforts had failed to win possession of La Bassée. Smith-Dorrien had hoped to cut the road between La Bassée and Lille, but soon found he could at best keep the Germans out of Béthune. He had been vigorously counter-attacked on

[1] The *London Gazette* of the 7th of December 1914 contained the names of two Indian soldiers as having been awarded the Victoria Cross: No. 1909 Naik Darwan Sing Negi, 1st Battalion, 39th Garhwal Rifles, and No. 4050 Sepoy Khudadad, 129th Duke of Connaught's own Baluchis. Naik Darwan Sing Negi earned it on November 23–4, near Festubert (see below, p. 213).

[2] Both battalions had suffered very heavy losses, over 300 in the case of the 57th, 200 in that of the 129th, but they were warmly congratulated by the cavalry commander on the fine fight they had put up.

October 20th and obliged to fall back three days later from his advanced position on the Aubers Ridge to a position in the lower ground in front of Givenchy and Neuve Chapelle. It was at the moment when the British were sorely strained by ten days' continuous fighting that the Indian troops began to come up and take their place in the line. This first instalment consisted of the Lahore Division under Lieutenant-General Watkis ; but little more than one of its three infantry brigades was at the moment available, for three-fourths of the Ferozepore Brigade, as has been seen, were with the Cavalry Corps near Messines, and the Sirhind Brigade was still in Egypt.

The third Brigade, the Jullundur Brigade, was immediately sent into action on the left of the IInd Corps and on the night of October 24th/25th took over trenches north-east of Neuve Chapelle which had been occupied by French cavalry. The 15th Sikhs, 34th Sikh Pioneers, and 59th Scinde Rifles were the Indian battalions employed. They had to occupy a line far too long for their numbers. They had to carry out reliefs at night when new to the country, to the ditches and wire entanglements. They were constantly being attacked ; they were under incessant shell fire ; and short rations, little sleep, soaking wet were for these first days of their fighting service in France the lot of these Indian soldiers.

Two attacks were made by the Germans on this section of the line on the 28th of October, but both were repulsed with loss. On the other hand a German attack on October 27th on Neuve Chapelle occupied by the 7th and 9th British Brigades was successful, creating a dangerous salient. The 9th Bhopals of the Ferozepore Brigade were at once ordered to counter-attack with the object of taking the enemy in flank. Establishing touch with the Royal West Kents, who had held their ground magnificently, on the south of the village, the Bhopals caught the Germans in flank and drove them back some distance, doing useful service at a critical moment.

There was, however, still great danger of a break in the line, for there was a considerable gap between the Bhopals and two companies of the 47th Sikhs on their left.[1] This gap was filled up in the darkness by the 21st Company of Sappers and Miners who, so urgent was the necessity, had to be employed

[1] These companies formed the reserve of the Jullundur Brigade which was itself very hard pressed and could ill afford to spare them.

as infantry. On the other side of the 47th Sikhs was the 20th Company of Sappers and Miners.

On the 28th, after our artillery had bombarded the village for half an hour, the Sikhs and the Sappers and Miners advanced to attack it. They advanced across open ground. As they drew near the Germans in the front line retired, and the pursuit was carried into the streets of the village with the accompaniment of very heavy fighting from house to house. At the cross-roads in the centre of the village the troops came under machine-gun fire both from the houses in the village itself and from machine guns posted outside the village. Desperate charges were made to stop it but without success, and at the moment when Major Davidson, commanding the 47th, was preparing for a final effort, the enemy came on in overwhelming numbers, while the machine-gun fire was redoubled. Had help been at hand to complete the work which the Sikhs and Sappers and Miners had so well begun, Neuve Chapelle would probably have been retained, but no reinforcements were available and there was nothing for it but retirement, with additional heavy losses while retreating under hot fire. Eventually only 140 out of the 289 Sikhs engaged in the fight got back to the trenches, while the losses of the Sappers and Miners came to nearly 120, including all the 8 British officers with the two companies.

It had not been possible with the force available to recapture Neuve Chapelle ; but the Indian troops had shown a splendid fighting spirit, and had well earned the special mention in Sir John French's dispatch of the 20th of November 1914, ' on the 28th October especially the 47th Sikhs and the 20th and 21st Companies of the 3rd Sappers and Miners distinguished themselves by their gallant conduct in the attack on Neuve Chapelle, losing heavily in officers and men '.

While the fighting described above was taking place the remainder of the Indian Corps were continuing to arrive in France and to make their way up towards the fighting line. The Meerut Division, commanded by Lieutenant-General C. A. Anderson, came up to the front on the 29th of October. A few days later the Secunderabad Cavalry Brigade and the Jodhpur Lancers came up, and only the Sirhind Brigade of the Lahore Division, which was still in Egypt, was now wanting to make the Indian Army Corps complete.

The line taken over by the Indian Corps in relief of the

SIKHS (under LT. SMYTHE, V.C.) returning from the trenches

GURKHAS GOING INTO ACTION

main body of the IInd Corps [1] extended from Givenchy (two miles west of La Bassée) northward round the rear of Neuve Chapelle to Fauquissart. It was taken over during the night of the 29th of October—just immediately before the battle round Ypres was reaching its highest intensity. It was taken over in mud and rain, under the most miserable conditions for Indian soldiery. The Germans at this time made no great general attack on that portion of the line which was held by the Indian Corps but delivered a series of local attacks at various weak points in the position. The majority of these attacks were completely repulsed, but more than one success was scored. Thus on the night of October 29th/30th, the night after the Corps had taken over from Smith-Dorrien, the enemy attacked the trench held by the 2/8th Gurkhas of the Bareilly Brigade, Meerut Division, near la Quinque Rue. The trench was no more than a ditch, which was shelled through all the following day—the 30th October—but the Gurkhas drove back several attacks until their ammunition began to fall short. Then the remainder of the defenders were taken in the rear, the front trenches had to be abandoned, and the remnants of the battalion, reinforced by a battalion of British infantry, held out in the support trenches. Five British and two Gurkha officers were killed and three British and one Gurkha officer wounded. It was a hard experience for a most gallant battalion on their very first day in the firing line.

The Germans scored another local success in an attack on the 2/2nd Gurkhas of the Dehra Dun Brigade on the 2nd of November. This battalion was occupying trenches north-north-west of Neuve Chapelle, The attack was opened with a storm of high explosives, the trenches and their defenders were blown up, and the Germans occupied the position. A counter-attack was made with the greatest gallantry, but both the British officers in command and also the Gurkha officers were killed. In fact every officer in the front trenches gave his life, and the total losses of the battalion were seven British officers killed and one wounded; four Gurkha officers killed and three wounded. It was a dispiriting day; but even so

[1] The portions of the IInd Corps which were thus relieved by the Indian Corps had almost immediately to be thrown into the fight again, some in support of the Cavalry Corps at Messines, the majority to relieve the even more shattered and exhausted 7th Division on the right of Sir Douglas Haig's position in the Ypres Salient, where their assistance was invaluable.

a line was patched up in rear, the German advance was checked, and on the 5th of November British battalions were brought up and the support line trenches were retaken. After this for some time the enemy made no fresh attempt at an attack on any scale. Indeed it was rather the Indian Corps who showed themselves the more aggressive, being exceedingly active in patrol work and trying several small local attacks and raids, in which great initiative and resource was displayed by many officers and men. In few parts of the line were the Germans as persistently worried as by the Indian Corps.

On the 12th of November Lord Roberts visited the Corps head-quarters to hearten the Indians up in their depressing surroundings. He had served for forty-one years in India and was as devoted to the Indian Army as the Indian Army was to him. It was a bitter day when he arrived, with a cold raw east wind blowing. In simple words he told them how moved he was to find himself among troops by whose side he had fought in so many campaigns. Many persons had feared that the strange surroundings in which they had to fight would be too severe for Indian troops. But he had never shared that fear. He had fought with them too often in every kind of climate and against every kind of enemy not to be sure that there were no conditions so hard that they would not do their duty as soldiers. The fight might be long, for they must not think that the enemy was already defeated. He was strong still, very strong, and his organization was very great. But the Empire and its Allies were strong too, and would become stronger. They were even now only beginning to organize for war. So let every man do his utmost till the enemy was defeated. In this way he would do his duty to the Empire to which he belonged, and the glory of his deed would live for ever in India.[1]

So spoke the veteran soldier for the last time to his comrades. Three days later he was dead. In spite of the piercing cold he had discarded his greatcoat as the Indian troops were not wearing theirs. He was straightway stricken with pneumonia and died—but died among the men he loved and within hearing of the enemy's guns.

By the 23rd of November the enemy had carried his trenches to within a few yards of our line, and at dawn on that day he

[1] See *The Indian Corps in France*, pp. 92-3.

attacked with hand grenades the section east of Festubert. The 34th Pioneers were forced out of their trenches, and by 1.30 p.m. most of the line of the 58th Rifles and the whole of the front of the 34th Pioneers and 9th Bhopals had been lost. Only the stubborn defence made by the right and support companies of the 58th and by the 2nd Black Watch on their right, with the fine leadership of Colonel Southey commanding the 57th Wilde's Rifles and 129th Baluchis (both of which battalions had returned from the Messines area early in the month) prevented a big break in the line. Instructions now came that the original line must be made good before dawn, and after a preliminary artillery bombardment of the enemy's new position an infantry attack was launched at 4.30 p.m. and was finally carried through. But the fighting went on all night, and it was only towards morning that the trenches were finally cleared and reoccupied. In accomplishing this task specially fine work was done by some of the 1/39th Garhwalis and 57th Rifles who, headed by a gallant R.E. officer, Lt. Robson, by Captain Acworth (55th Coke's Rifles, attached 57th) and Naik Darwan Sing Negi of the Garhwalis, worked along a trench from traverse to traverse, clearing the way by throwing bombs, after which parties of bayonet men rushed forward and occupied each bay in turn. The Naik, though twice wounded, continued to fight on, was among the first to rush round into each successive bay, and gave a magnificent example of courage and endurance. He was deservedly awarded the V.C. The 6th Jats, 2/8th Gurkhas, and 58th Rifles all distinguished themselves in re-establishing the position.

The remainder of November passed without special incident, and on the 1st of December the Corps had the honour of a visit from the King-Emperor. It was an unexpected visit, and His Majesty's gracious sympathy and keen personal interest in the well-being of the soldiers gave great encouragement to the Indian Corps. A week later, on the 7th of December, the Sirhind Brigade arrived from Egypt and rejoined the Lahore Division.

During the early days of December, as Sir John French wrote in his dispatch of the 2nd of February 1915, certain indications along the whole front of the Allied line induced the French commanders and himself to believe that the enemy had withdrawn considerable forces from the western theatre,

of war. Arrangements were therefore made with the commander of the 8th French Army for an attack to be begun on the morning of the 14th of December. Two French corps and a brigade of the IInd British Corps attacked near Messines, and the Indian Corps were directed to co-operate by containing the enemy in their front. On the 16th of December therefore a battalion of the Ferozepore Brigade attacked the German trenches opposite Givenchy, and severe fighting followed but without any special result. On the 17th of December the Indian Corps, though now urgently in need of relief and rest, was ordered to demonstrate and to seize every favourable opportunity which might offer for capturing any of the enemy trenches.

Accordingly in the very early morning of the 19th of December began what may be called the battle of Givenchy, in which Givenchy was lost and recaptured, and which ended on the 23rd in the position being restored very much to its original condition. Though some of the front trenches in low-lying ground north of the village were not recovered, the all-important Givenchy knoll was won back.

The Meerut Division held the line south of Neuve Chapelle, and they were to attack the opposite German trenches and consolidate the captured position. Amid wind and rain on the night of 18th/19th December the attack was made with great dash by the Leicesters and 2/3rd Gurkhas of the Garhwal Brigade. There was initial success and the German front-line trenches were captured on a short front. But the Germans counter-attacked in strength and with the use of bombs forced us to retire from the positions won.

An attack by the Sirhind Brigade of the Lahore Division, who occupied the line from Givenchy north towards Neuve Chapelle, was also at first successful, two lines of the enemy's trenches being captured before dawn with little loss. But at daybreak it was found that the position was practically untenable. Both flanks were in the air, and a supporting attack which was late in starting and was therefore conducted in daylight failed, although attempted with the greatest gallantry and resolution. By dusk the whole of the captured trenches had to be abandoned and our men fell back on the original line.

From daylight on the 20th of December the enemy directed

a heavy artillery fire against the whole Indian front, and infantry attacks followed. Givenchy was the centre point of the attack, and by 10 a.m. the Germans had driven back the Ferozepore men who were holding it and had captured a considerable part of the village. Then followed determined efforts on our part to recover what had been lost. About 5 p.m. a gallant attack by the 1st Manchester Regiment had effected this object and cleared the enemy out of the two lines of trenches to the north-east, but the Germans were still in possession of trenches to the north of the village. Accordingly a further attack was made on this side by the 47th Sikhs and 7th Dragoon Guards at 1 a.m. on the 21st, but this effort and another made at 4 a.m. both failed. Northward again similar misfortunes occurred. The 2/2nd Gurkhas had been forced to retire and had left the flank of the Seaforth Highlanders exposed. Supports had therefore to be pushed up to fill the gap, and first a brigade and then a division from the general Army reserve had to be sent to support the Indian Corps. With this assistance a hold on Givenchy had been obtained by 5 p.m. on the 21st. On the 22nd Sir Douglas Haig took over command from Sir James Willcocks; by evening the position at Givenchy itself was practically re-established, and during the 23rd the enemy's activities ceased.

It had been a hard hand-to-hand struggle of the fiercest description and fought out under most adverse conditions in trenches choked with mud and water. Cases of individual bravery were innumerable. Indeed the maintenance of the line was dependent more upon the staunchness, the endurance, the hard solid fighting qualities of regimental officers and men than upon skill in generalship, for which there was little scope. But where officers and men were heavily handicapped in these early battles was in material. There were not sufficient guns, there was not sufficient ammunition for what guns there were, while the bombs supplied were few and not of so effective a type as those subsequently in use.

# CHAPTER V

## OPERATIONS IN FRANCE, 1915 AND AFTER

THE Indian Corps had now for two months been holding a long strip of the line and had had to fight a formidable enemy constantly aggressive, highly skilled, and well munitioned. They had had to fight, too, under conditions the least suited to them. They had therefore fairly won a period of rest, and after the struggle at Givenchy they were withdrawn into billets in reserve.

Drafts from India filled up the ranks, but as already explained these were hardly satisfactory, and it would be idle to pretend that the fighting value of the Indian Corps in the early months of 1915 was up to the level of the force originally dispatched from India. The Corps had already had 10,000 casualties, 7,000 in Indian units, and to reconstruct shattered units while actually holding trenches and engaged in daily warfare was a task of extreme difficulty. However, about the end of February Sir John French decided to carry out a strong attack as soon as possible. He hoped to take advantage of the apparent weakening of the enemy on the British front and to surprise the Germans by a sudden attack aimed at recovering the Aubers Ridge from which we had been driven in October. That this would be of assistance to our Russian allies and would also favour the attempts which were being made by the French forces at Arras and in Champagne was clear, while what the Commander-in-Chief considered as 'perhaps the most weighty consideration of all' was 'the need of fostering the offensive spirit in the troops under my command after the trying and possibly enervating experiences which they had gone through of a severe winter in the trenches'.

Early in March the difficulties and drawbacks which the winter weather imposed upon a vigorous offensive were lessened by the drying up of the country and by spells of brighter weather. An attack was therefore planned on Neuve Chapelle with the object not only of securing that village but of capturing the salient made by the German lines at this

point, which had caused our lines opposite to be both difficult and very costly to hold through the winter months. Further it was hoped to push on and secure the high ground of the Aubers Ridge behind it, and so threaten the enemy's communication between La Bassée and Lille. The direction of the attack was put in the hands of Sir Douglas Haig, now commanding the 1st Army; and he was to be supported by troops of the 2nd Army and the general reserve. In this force was included the Indian Corps who were now holding the line west of Neuve Chapelle and south and east of Richebourg St. Vaast. For the purpose of making an intense bombardment of the enemy's position before the infantry delivered their attack, nearly 480 guns and howitzers had been massed, and at 7.30 a.m. on the 10th of March the bombardment began, timed to last for thirty-five minutes. At this early stage of the war the artillery concentration and the gunfire which followed was, on the British side, of exceptional magnitude, though far outdone by later efforts.

A few minutes after 8 a.m. the guns lifted on to Neuve Chapelle itself, and immediately the Garhwal Brigade of the Meerut Division (consisting of the 1/39th and 2/39th Garhwal Rifles, the 2nd Leicesters and the 2/3rd Gurkhas with the 3rd London Territorials in support) charged forward. The artillery fire had been most effective, wire entanglements had been destroyed, defences had been blown away, and those of the defenders who survived had been utterly stupefied and dominated by the intensity of the fire. The first objective was reached without difficulty—it was the trenches to the south of Neuve Chapelle from the road junction known as Port Arthur on the right to a point just short of Pont Logy on the left. The Dehra Dun Brigade was in support. The Bareilly held the line along the Rue du Bois and the Lahore Division was in reserve. While the 2/39th Garhwalis on the left and the 2/3rd Gurkhas and 2nd Leicesters in the centre of the Garhwal Brigade reached all their objectives, capturing many prisoners and inflicting heavy losses on the enemy, the 1/39th Garhwalis on the right unluckily bore too much to the right and came up against the German wire at a point outside the area bombarded. The wire here was practically intact, and the Germans having escaped the bombardment were ready to receive the attack with rifle and machine-gun fire. It is very

greatly to the credit of the Garhwalis that they forced their way in, despite crippling losses, and established themselves firmly in the German front line, but between them and the 2nd Leicesters on their left there was a gap where a strong German detachment held out for several hours, putting up a desperate defence. This was not finally overcome till late in the afternoon, when two companies of the 3rd Londons,[1] the reserve battalion of the Garhwal Brigade, and the 1st Seaforths of the Dehra Dun Brigade, made a fresh attack from front and flank. This was completely successful, nearly 150 Germans being taken and touch established with the remnants of the 1/39th Garhwalis who had clung tenaciously to the lodgement they had effected earlier in the day. Unluckily this delay and the necessity for employing the Seaforths as well as the reserves of the Garhwal Brigade had prevented the Meerut Division from pushing on against the Bois de Biez. It was not till after 4 p.m. that the Dehra Dun Brigade could deploy for its advance, and it was 5.30 p.m. before its attack started.

Meanwhile two brigades of the 8th Division had assaulted the German trenches west and north-west of Neuve Chapelle. The 23rd Brigade on the left was held up by wire entanglements which had not been sufficiently cut by the gun fire, but the 25th carried all its objectives, and pushing on into Neuve Chapelle cleared the village after sharp fighting and joined hands with the 2/3rd Gurkhas who had reached the southern end of the village about the same time as the 25th Brigade entered it from the west. Before 10 a.m. the whole village was in our hands, and this success, combined with powerful artillery support, enabled the 23rd Brigade to advance. Meanwhile the artillery completely cut off the village and the surrounding country from any German reinforcements which might have been thrown into the fight.

After the village had been securely captured we proceeded to consolidate our position, and here an unfortunate delay occurred before any further advance towards the Aubers Ridge, which was the ultimate object of the attack, was made. The infantry were somewhat disorganized from having to fight their way through intricate trenches and entanglements and

[1] A Territorial or Extra Reserve battalion had by this time been added to each brigade of the Indian Corps.

among the buildings of the village, and before pushing on it was necessary to get units together to some extent. More serious was it that telephonic communication had been cut by the enemy's fire, communication between front and rear was difficult, and in consequence reinforcements who might have exploited the initial success were held back till too late. The check to the 23rd Brigade had necessitated other troops leaving their assigned direction, and an adjustment of consequent confusion was required. An orchard held by the enemy north of Neuve Chapelle also threatened the flank of an advance towards the Aubers Ridge. From all these causes, and from the reserves not having been brought up in time, there was a delay which enabled the Germans to take measures to meet the threatened attack, and when at 3.30 p.m. the IVth Corps at length began to advance again, German reserves had been rushed forward and the attack was everywhere held up.

The Indian Corps at that time had the Garhwal Brigade firmly established in a line of trenches running down the eastern side of Neuve Chapelle to Port Arthur and facing the Bois de Biez, the assault on which was to form the second phase of the operations. As has been stated, the Dehra Dun Brigade under the command of Brigadier-General C. W. Jacob had hitherto been in support of the Garhwal Brigade; at 4 p.m. two of its battalions were moved up to the outskirts of the village, and at 5.30 p.m. they advanced to their objective, the Bois de Biez. It was now nearly dark, and moreover the attack came under fire from both flanks. However, the troops rapidly crossed the intervening stream, the river Layes, on portable bridges, the wood was assaulted, and the outskirts were gained and held. But here the advance was brought to a standstill, for the other assaulting brigades had been held up and information came to hand that the enemy had been reinforced and that the wood was strongly held. A retirement to the western bank of the river Layes became imperative and was effected in good order.

During the night orders were issued for a further attack on the Bois de Biez by the Meerut Division at 7 a.m. on the 11th; but when seven o'clock arrived it was found that the 8th Division was held up and could not get in line with the Dehra Dun Brigade. Nor was it found possible to make substantial progress during the entire day, for the artillery were unable to deal effectively with the various houses and defended

localities which were holding up the advance. Bad weather prevented proper aerial observation, and the telephonic communication between the artillery observers and their batteries was cut. From these two causes it was impossible to direct the artillery fire with sufficient accuracy, and although the Jullundur and Sirhind Brigades of the Lahore Division were brought forward in readiness to relieve the Dehra Dun Brigade, on the front of the Indian Corps no progress could be made and but little on that of the IVth Corps.

On the 12th the same bad weather prevailed and hampered artillery action. An attack by the Indian Corps was to be made at 11 a.m. It was to be preceded by concentrated artillery fire and was to be made in conjunction with the 8th Division by the Sirhind and Jullundur Brigades. Owing to heavy morning mists the time of assault was postponed till 1 p.m., and before it could be made the Germans had made a furious counter-attack south of Neuve Chapelle in the angle where the Rue du Bois cuts the La Bassée road. Here the Garhwal Brigade, with the Bareilly Brigade on their right, were holding the line, and they bore the brunt of the attack. At 5.20 a.m. the enemy opened a heavy bombardment and at 5.45 their infantry advanced in mass formation. As soon as they were recognized we opened a terrific and most effective fire, and the assault was brought to a complete standstill. Rarely in the war was so much damage done in a brief space. The Germans were literally mowed down wholesale, and their losses were calculated at 2,000 men. At 9 a.m. the enemy made a second attempt but fared no better.

Now at 1 p.m. the Sirhind and Jullundur Brigades moved forward. They were met by a heavy fire in front and, as the 25th Brigade was unable to advance, were also exposed to heavy enfilade firing ; they could therefore make little progress. The Sirhind Brigade, which had relieved the Dehra Dun Brigade early in the morning, did indeed have some success at the start, and the Highland Light Infantry, which formed the leading battalion of this Brigade, charging across open ground, in spite of heavy casualties captured some of the enemy's advanced trenches. But as other troops had not kept pace with their advance they were exposed to fire in flank as well as in front, further progress became impossible, and all that could be done was to consolidate the ground won.

Insistent orders were later received from the 1st Army Commander to press the attack on the Bois de Biez, the Dehra Dun Brigade which had just got back to billets was recalled, and the whole Lahore Division was ordered to push on to the wood at all costs. At 5.50 p.m. our guns bombarded for fifteen minutes when a second attack was attempted. It was however smothered by the enemy's frontal and enfilade fire, and our men could not debouch from the trenches.

General Keary, commanding the Lahore Division, impressed by the urgency of his orders, was preparing for yet another assault at 10.45 p.m., preceded again by a fifteen minutes bombardment; but the operation was vetoed by Sir James Willcocks, who did not consider that an attack in pitch darkness over unknown ground and with such a large body of troops was feasible, and at 10.5 p.m. Sir Douglas Haig ordered all further operations to be suspended and positions gained to be consolidated.

Was the battle of Neuve Chapelle a success or a failure? We had not attained our ultimate object—the heights which commanded the road from Lille to La Bassée. We had been brought to a standstill just outside Neuve Chapelle and were still in the low ground. Further, we had suffered a loss of 12,811 total casualties made up of 190 officers and 2,337 other ranks killed; 359 officers and 8,174 other ranks wounded; and 23 officers and 1,728 other ranks missing, of which total the losses of the Indian Corps amounted to 4,233, made up as follows:

| | *British Officers.* | *Indian Officers.* | *Other Ranks (British).* | *Other Ranks (Indian).* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Killed . . . | 41 | 22 | 364 | 408 |
| Wounded . . | 91 | 36 | 1,461 | 1,495 |
| Missing . . . | 1 | 2 | 87 | 225 |
| Total . . | 133 | 60 | 1,912 | 2,128 |

On the other hand we had advanced our line on a front of two miles to a depth of 1,000 yards, had recaptured the village of Neuve Chapelle, and straightened out the dangerous salient which had caused us so much loss and trouble during the winter; we had inflicted on the Germans a loss of probably 16,000 men; we had shown the enemy that we were now capable on occasions of concentrating superior artillery fire; we had compelled them to draw on the adjoining army for help to withstand our

attack, and in spite of mistakes made which marred success the fighting put new heart into our troops and spoke to them of future victory.[1]

The next important fighting in which Indian troops took part was in the battles of Ypres, 1915, which Sir John French considered[2] not less grave and critical than those of 1914. On the 24th of April, 1915, two days after the first gas-attack upon the French north-east of Ypres,[3] the Lahore Division under Major-General Keary was moved north and on the 25th arrived at a position 4 miles north-west of Ypres. Attacks were being made by large forces of the enemy upon the British positions east of Ypres, and these attacks were being supported by a mass of heavy and field artillery. The enemy had also in barbarous disregard of the well-known usage of civilized war and in flagrant defiance of the Hague Convention employed poison gas, and poison gas of so virulent a nature that any human being brought in contact with it was first paralysed and then suffered a lingering and agonizing death. In the attack commencing on April 22nd resort was had to these poisonous gas fumes whenever the wind was favourable. The first to suffer was a French African Division, and the effect upon them was so virulent as to render the whole division practically incapable of any action at all. It was at first impossible to realize what had actually happened. The smoke and fumes hid everything from sight and hundreds of men were thrown into a comatose or dying condition. Within an hour the whole position of the French had to be abandoned, together with about fifty guns.

The left flank of the Canadian Division (who were on the right of the French) was thus left dangerously exposed to serious attack in flank. There was a prospect of their being overwhelmed and of the Germans attempting to cut off the British troops occupying the whole Ypres salient. The position was critical in the extreme. But in spite of the danger to which

[1] In the course of the battle a third V.C. was won by an Indian soldier, Rifleman Gobar Sing Negi of the 2/39th Garhwalis, who acted as bayonet man to a bombing party which pushed some way along the trenches, clearing a long stretch and killing many Germans. He led the party with great courage and dash, and, though killed later on, was awarded a posthumous V.C.

[2] See *The Indian Corps in France* by Lt.-Col. Merewether and Sir F. E. Smith (Murray, 1917), p. 281. The present account has been largely based on this book.

[3] See vol. ii, pp. 88, &c.

SIR JAMES WILLCOCKS in the trenches of an Indian Cavalry machine-gun section

58TH RIFLES PREPARED AGAINST GAS

they were exposed the Canadians held their ground with magnificent tenacity and courage, as did also the gallant 28th Division, and averted a disaster which might have had the most serious consequences.[1]

Supports were then hurried up, and among them the Lahore Division which was pushed up into the fighting line on the 26th of April, being placed under the orders of General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, commanding the 2nd Army. Issuing from the north-east corner of Ypres is the road to Pilckem. On the west of the road the French strongly reinforced were to attack the enemy immediately in their front. On the east of the road the Lahore Division were to attack the enemy's position about two miles north of Ypres. The division had just carried out an exhausting march and been straightway flung into the fight. The exact position of the enemy's trenches was unknown, and our artillery was unable to bombard them effectively. The attack therefore had to be made at a great disadvantage. At 12.30 p.m. the brigades moved out to take up their positions. The right of the Jullundur Brigade (whose first line was composed of the 1st Manchesters, 40th Pathans,[2] and 47th Sikhs) rested on a farm slightly west of Wieltje, while the Ferozepore Brigade (with a first line of the 129th Baluchis, 57th Rifles, and Connaught Rangers) continued the line to the left as far as the Ypres–Langemarck road where it touched the French. The second line, at an interval of 400 yards, was composed of the 59th Rifles and 4th Suffolks of the Jullundur Brigade and the 4th Londons and the 9th Bhopal Infantry of the Ferozepore Brigade.

At 1.20 p.m. the guns opened fire, and immediately the bombardment began the attacking troops advanced. They had to cross a long stretch of open country, the ground sloped gently upwards to a crest,[3] then downwards to a little stream at the bottom, then upwards again, smooth and bare, to the German position.

From the first the German artillery fired very steadily, and

[1] See vol. ii, pp. 88, &c.

[2] This battalion, which had been in China when war broke out, had just arrived in France and had been posted to the Jullundur Brigade in place of the 15th Sikhs transferred to the Sirhind Brigade.

[3] This was approximately the line of what was later called Buffs Road, Hill Top Farm being at the crest of the ridge.

when the crest was crossed our troops were exposed to enemy fire of every description. The difficulties of the attack were increased by confusion in our ranks. At the beginning of the advance the Jullundur Brigade on the right lost direction and bore too much to the left, crowding in on the Ferozepore Brigade and forcing it off to the left. But the troops pressed bravely on, down and up, almost to the enemy trenches, though never able actually to reach them, the farthest advance being brought to a standstill by the terrible fire about sixty yards away from the German lines. Even then they might with the supports coming up have gathered renewed momentum and carried the enemy's position, had not the Germans once again, about 2.30 p.m., had recourse to gas. Our men were wholly without protection against the fumes, and those who were not laid dead or dying on the spot fell back in confusion, some for more than a mile, before they could be rallied. A small party, however, mainly Connaughts and Manchesters, with men from several Indian units, still held on despite the gas, and though pushed back slightly by a counter-attack remained within assaulting range of the German lines until after midnight. Farther to the left Subadar Mir Dast (55th Rifles, attached 57th) greatly distinguished himself by rallying a mixed party, holding on to an advanced trench until after dark, when he retired by order, collecting various other scattered parties and bringing in many wounded. For his courage and good leadership he was awarded the V.C.

This retirement exposed the left of the line. The Sirhind Brigade was therefore brought up to La Brique. The 15th Sikhs and 1/4th Gurkhas were detached from it and assigned to the Ferozepore Brigade, and a fresh advance was made, while the remaining two battalions were held in reserve. In the event, however, after such further reconnaissance as could be made in the darkness, the attack was counter-ordered, and the Sikhs and Gurkhas dug themselves in on the line of the farm later known as Turco Farm.

On the following day, the 27th of April, the attack went forward. A bombardment began at 12.30 p.m. when the Ferozepore Brigade at once deployed for attack to get up in line with the Sirhind Brigade, the supports of which also began moving forward to reinforce the parties which had during the night relieved the advanced portions of the Jullundur Brigade.

In passing the fatal ridge by Hill Top Farm our men came under severe cross fire from rifles and machine guns both in front and on their flanks. Every exposed spot was subjected to an overwhelming volume of accurately estimated fire. Casualties were heavy, and those who did nearly reach the enemy's trenches found the wire in front untouched.

Nevertheless the commander of the 2nd Army ordered the assault to be pressed on vigorously. A new bombardment began at 5.30 p.m. from all the batteries available; and a fresh attack was started. But this also was beaten down by the enemy's fire. A French attack was also driven back by the enemy's fire and by dense clouds of gas. The position was very critical, but fortunately the Germans made no counter-attack and our troops were able to settle down and dig themselves in.

Only artillery duels took place on the 28th of April, and during the night of 29th/30th the Jullundur and Ferozepore Brigades were withdrawn after being continuously in action for three days. The Sirhind Brigade remained in position two days longer, holding itself in readiness to support French attacks that were never made and making a small advance itself on May 1st; on May 2nd it also was withdrawn, and on May 3rd the Lahore Division left in order to rejoin the Indian Corps. It had in this battle suffered a loss of killed, wounded, and missing which amounted to 3,889 out of 15,980, that is to say about a quarter of its strength. If the fine soldiers of this Division and their British and French comrades had not succeeded in recovering the ground lost on April 22nd, at any rate they had prevented the enemy from exploiting their success and capturing Ypres. The counter-attacks which had cost the Lahore Division so dearly had at least held up the Germans and prevented them from advancing at a time when a further advance of even half a mile in that restricted area would have rendered the whole position east of Ypres untenable. It was a negative success but none the less vital. The battles of Ypres, 1915, like those of 1914, had entailed the severest trials and most stubborn fighting. At the best the enemy had been checked. But that checking of the Germans at the commencement of the war and preventing them from reaching the Channel ports and cutting off England from France was what laid the foundation for eventual victory.

The Indian Corps had little but losses to show at the time. But its contribution to the victory was of a value only to be appreciated properly at the end of the war.

The next active part which the Corps had to play was in the offensive during the month of May, which had for its general object the support of the French in their offensive farther south and for its particular object the capture of the Aubers Ridge which commanded the road from Lille to La Bassée. The French were attacking towards Lens, and the British by a simultaneous attack were to draw off the German troops from opposing the French. The entire Franco-British offensive was intended to occupy German troops on the Western front and prevent their being sent to oppose the Russians in the East. But although the British offensive was undertaken chiefly in support of the French, it had also the above-mentioned distinct and important objective—that of completing what had not been completed in the Battle of Neuve Chapelle and gaining possession of the Aubers Ridge.

These operations were to be undertaken by the 1st Army under the command of Sir Douglas Haig. The Indian Corps was to attack from the line of the Rue du Bois and make for the line Ligny-le-Grand—La Cliqueterie Farm. On the right of the Indian Corps was the 1st Corps resting in Givenchy. On the left of the Indian Corps, but separated from it by a gap of some miles, was the IVth Corps which was to advance on La Cliqueterie Farm in the hope of effecting a junction with the Indian Corps well in rear of the Bois de Biez.

At 5 a.m. on the morning of the 9th of May—a fine morning—the bombardment began and lasted for forty minutes. At 5.25 a.m. the infantry who were to deliver the attack, the Dehra Dun Brigade (consisting of the 2/2nd Gurkhas on the right, the 1/4th Seaforths in the centre, and the 1st Seaforths on the left, with the 6th Jats and 1/9th Gurkhas in support) went over the parapet and into the open. It had been intended that the attacking troops should, under cover of their guns, move close up to the German lines[1] before making the assault, but on the first sign of a movement on our part the front was swept by rifles and machine guns from the enemy's trenches. The carnage in the leading battalions was terrible, the attack

[1] The left of the attack was approximately marked by the La Bassée–Estaires road.

failed, the German guns played havoc among the troops assembling in support, the attack of the 1st Division on the right of the Indian Corps was also a failure, and the IVth Corps on the left, after an initial success, was beaten back. In the afternoon of this same day another attack was organized to be carried out by the Bareilly Brigade in relief of the Dehra Dun, the 2nd Black Watch being on the right, the 58th Rifles in the centre, and the 41st Dogras on the left. The bombardment began at 3.20 p.m. and at 3.40 the troops came out for the attack. But immediately they appeared they were swept down, as their predecessors had been, by irresistible fire, and though a few men of the 41st Dogras reached some cover close to the enemy's line, they were too few to achieve anything. It was evident that neither the German defences nor the defenders in them had suffered appreciably from our artillery fire. The defences had in fact been greatly strengthened since the battle of Neuve Chapelle. Concrete had been extensively used to increase the resisting power of the parapet, while machine guns sited in pits at the base of the parapet and practically invulnerable to anything but a direct hit swept No Man's Land with a murderous grazing fire.

However, notwithstanding this disastrous repulse of May 9th, Sir John French determined to continue the offensive so as to divert German reserves from opposing the French attacks near Arras. It was decided to use the 7th Division to attack east from Festubert, and in co-operation with its advance the 2nd Division and Indian Corps were to renew the attack from the line of the Rue du Bois, being now the left of the attack instead of the right. After one postponement the new attack was launched shortly before midnight on May 15th. A continuous bombardment had been carried out throughout the day, and at 11.30 p.m. the guns lifted and the attack began, the Garhwal Brigade being the troops employed. A ditch in front of the British lines had given much trouble in the previous fighting, and bridges were now provided to enable the troops to cross. But immediately the troops attempted to advance they were met with the same murderous fire as before, the bridges became blocked, and the attack was swept away. About three hours later, at 2.45 a.m. on the 16th of May, a fresh bombardment opened preparatory to a further assault by the Garhwal Brigade, but this effort also was a failure and

it was decided to make no further attempts to advance on this front but to continue the attack due east of Festubert where more success had been achieved. On the next day, the 17th of May, the Sirhind Brigade came into the line to relieve a brigade of the 2nd Division in trenches to the right which had been captured in the course of the fighting. The relief was a matter of much difficulty owing to the condition of the battered trenches, a litter of mud and water tenanted by dead and wounded. An attack by the Sirhind Brigade on the Ferme du Bois had been fixed for the afternoon of the 18th of May. It was to coincide with an attack on another point by the Guards' Brigade. An artillery bombardment began at 2 p.m. and the assault was to be made at 4.30 p.m. But when the time came the bombing parties were held up in their own trenches by the force of the German fire, and in the face of that fire no attack could be launched.

After many hours of artillery bombardment and under cover of the guns, at 1 a.m. on the 22nd the Sirhind Brigade launched another attack on the Ferme du Bois. The ground was much broken up and in the darkness there was some confusion of units and loss of direction. On the right of the attack the 1/4th Gurkhas, led by Major H. E. Moule, suddenly found themselves up against a ditch full of water, on the further side of which was barbed wire little damaged by our bombardment. Major Moule, Captain Robinson, and a few men overcame all obstacles and reached the enemy's trench, but of the gallant party none returned. The remainder of the attack was held up.

So ended the spring offensive so far as the Indian Corps was concerned. It had been costly and had failed in its main object. But that object was beyond the capacity of the Corps, and the only satisfaction to be gained was that the sacrifices made did indirectly contribute to eventual success.

During the summer of 1915 the Indian units of the Indian Corps were thoroughly reorganized. After the heavy fighting of May which had involved the British forces in losses altogether out of proportion to the scanty gains made at Festubert, no major operations were undertaken on the British front for nearly four months. During this period the activities of the Indian Corps were confined to patrol work, leading to occasional encounters with the enemy, and the only real incidents of note

were the arrival of fresh battalions from Egypt,[1] to replace some of the shattered units, and a long rest out of the line, nearly a month in all, given to the Indian troops in July and August to enable them to assimilate the drafts by which they had been recently filled up. These drafts were of much better quality than those which had replaced the earlier casualties, but even so the heavy losses in British officers and the unfamiliarity of the new hands with the conditions of trench warface and with the units to which they were drafted made this rest highly desirable.

In September active operations were resumed and the Indian Corps was called upon to take a part in the big offensive to be launched southward from the La Bassée Canal to Loos. But before the battle was fought, Sir James Willcocks had retired from the command of the Corps and his place had been taken by Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Anderson, till then commanding the Meerut Division, in command of which Brigadier-General Jacob succeeded him.

The French were at this date attacking in Champagne, and the British were to try and cut the communications between Lille and Soissons, and by attacking at various points keep the enemy in doubt where and when the main assault was to be made. The Indian Corps were now in position due north of Neuve Chapelle, immediately opposite Mauquissart and Moulin du Piètre which were held by the Germans, and for the Corps three objectives were laid down. Firstly, to attack the enemy's line between Sunken Road and Winchester Road.[2] Secondly, to gain the high ground between Haut Pommereau and La Cliqueterie Farm. Thirdly, from that point to continue the advance in a south-easterly direction in order to assist the main offensive in the south by turning the La Bassée defences from the north.

Very careful and elaborate arrangements were made for the attack. It was to be preceded by four days' bombardment. A mine was to be exploded under the enemy's parapet, opposite the left of our attack, gas was to be employed just before the assault, and on each flank of the assaulting troops smoke

[1] The 69th and 89th Punjabis came via Gallipoli, the 33rd Punjabis and 93rd Burma Infantry direct from Egypt.

[2] The assault was being delivered from the advanced positions secured by the IVth Corps at the battle of Neuve Chapelle.

barrages were to be formed. Lastly, field guns were to be placed so as to destroy, by point blank fire, machine guns and their emplacements.

On September 21st the bombardment began and lasted through four days and nights. In the early morning of the 25th the gas was liberated, but the wind, which had been fairly favourable, changed, and a serious disaster was only averted by the detachments in the front lines turning off the gas before it had done much damage—to our own men. At 5.45 a.m. the mine was exploded, with a noise which was heard for miles round. At 5.50 a.m. an intense bombardment began. At 6 a.m. the guns lifted and the infantry attack opened. The attack was carried out by the Garhwal Brigade on the right and the Bareilly on the left. On the right of the Garhwal Brigade were the 2/3rd Gurkhas. They advanced on a narrow front in case the wire entanglements before them had not been cut. The distance to be traversed was only 200 yards and for nearly half the way the smoke hid our men from the Germans, but as soon as they came into view they were shot down rapidly. Lieutenant Bagot Chester in command of a double company when he reached the wire found it uncut, and the supporting double company also came up against uncut wire. Lieutenant-Colonel Brakspear and Lieutenants Wood and Tyson were killed and the attack failed, only a very few men getting into the German trenches where they were quickly overwhelmed.[1]

The 2nd Leicesters attacking on the left of the Gurkhas had better fortune. The attack began at 6 a.m. and the lines, quickly following and well supporting each other, in ten minutes time forced their way into the German position, and some of the left-hand files pushing on farther reached the road from Mauquissart to the Duck's Bill where the survivors dug in.

A minute before the Leicesters started, the 2/8th Gurkhas on their left began their attack and the first German position was reached and taken by the leading double company without serious loss. The company then pushed forward, bearing,

[1] This attack gave Rifleman Kulbir Thapa the chance to win another V.C. for the Indian Corps. He was one of the few who got into the German trenches and not only got out again himself but managed to bring with him a wounded man of the Leicesters whom he had found in rear of the enemy's front line. After rescuing this man Kulbir Thapa went back and brought in two wounded Gurkhas.

however, too much to the left, and took up a position on some rising ground, while patrols were sent out to establish touch with the battalions on either side. The supports then advanced and pressing on ultimately reached and occupied the German trenches immediately in front of Moulin du Piètre. But this position they were unable to retain, for the enemy counter-attacked in force and, our attack on the right having been held up, this advance party was taken in flank by the Germans. They made a resolute and stubborn resistance but by 1.30 all were killed or captured.

The next battalion on the left was the 4th Black Watch. Next to them on their left were the 69th Punjabis and on the left of the 69th Punjabis were the 2nd Black Watch, the left-hand battalion of the Brigade, on whose front 130 yards away the mine had been exploded. At 6 a.m. immediately after the explosion, the 2nd Black Watch charged with a rush and occupied the enemy's trench. Then meeting with little opposition they drove the enemy back on to his second line of trenches.

The 69th Punjabis on the left of the 4th and on the right of the 2nd Black Watch had much the same experience, bursting through the enemy's front system and reaching the front of Moulin du Piètre. The 4th Black Watch also charging at the same time took the enemy's front line with little difficulty, and eventually reached a trench about fifty yards from the Moulin du Piètre. Thus within a short time after the opening of the attack all three leading battalions of the Bareilly Brigade were established in the enemy's second line and it looked as if a substantial success had been achieved. But their losses had been heavy, and though the 33rd Punjabis in support of the 4th Black Watch advanced to the Moulin their assistance did not suffice to carry the line on. The position of the Bareilly Brigade was indeed precarious. Both its flanks were in the air, for although some 300 of the 2/8th Gurkhas had reached the second German line they were not in touch with the rest of the Garhwal Brigade. The Germans in the second line put up a stubborn fight and were soon reinforced from the rear, while their artillery kept up a steady fire, and before long counter-attacks began to develop against both flanks of the advanced party. For some time the Bareilly Brigade hung on, but its bombs ran short and efforts to replenish the supply failed. Gradually both battalions of the Black Watch and the 33rd

and 69th Punjabis were forced back. A series of stands was made and a stubborn resistance offered, but the Germans were in great force and soon after 1 p.m. the remnants of the Bareilly Brigade were back in the British trenches; the reserves of the brigade had already been absorbed into the fight and were not available to make a successful stand, otherwise the retirement might have been stopped on them and the salient at Mauquissart at any rate might have been retained.

Thus along the whole front attacked, the Indian Corps was unable to hold the positions at first taken. Probably a too rapid advance to the enemy's second line had been made and it would have been wiser to have consolidated the position won. But a continual offensive had been so strongly insisted on, that the error may be easily understood. Moreover the advanced troops naturally expected that they would be reinforced and supported from the rear. That they were not was due to congestion in the front line and communication trenches and largely the result of our own gas which prevented the advance of the Dehra Dun Brigade till it was too late to be of any avail.

It can at least be claimed that the Indian Corps carried out the role assigned to them of retaining the enemy on their front and holding large numbers of them from the main attack. Its casualties, however, had been heavy, nearly 4,000 of all ranks.

The battle of Loos was the last battle in which the Indian Corps was engaged in France. Great difficulty had been experienced in keeping the units up to strength at such a distance from their base, and it was decided to employ the Indian forces—except the cavalry—in theatres of war nearer India. Accordingly on the 10th of November the Indian Corps was relieved from the line and proceeded to embark at Marseilles. When they left France the British lines ran very much as they had found them a year earlier; if in places they had been pushed forward at others they had gone back. But if the Indian Corps had not had the satisfaction of thrusting the Germans back to the Rhine, their work in holding up the advance in 1914 had been a service of vital importance. If they had shared in no victory that could be marked on the map and had suffered terrible losses, they had nevertheless played a gallant and worthy part in the most excruciatingly

critical stage of the war. While the Canadian and Australian Forces were still in training, and the New Armies from Great Britain were being organized, the Army Corps from India was able to join with the Regulars and Territorials from England in staying the fierce onrush of the Germans; holding the position, and gaining the time for those mighty armies of 1918 which were to sweep the Germans utterly broken and defeated into their homelands once more.

But it was only the Indian infantry divisions who left France at this juncture. The two divisions of the Indian Cavalry Corps remained in France for nearly two years and a half after the departure of their comrades of the infantry. In that period the opportunities for the employment of cavalry were few and far between. 'Trench warfare' denied the mounted men all the chances which even in these days of machine guns they may still be able to snatch in a period of movement, and the role of the Indian cavalry was one of enforced waiting, varied by one or two fleeting and elusive openings and by a certain amount of employment dismounted. In the summer of 1915 the Indian Cavalry Corps had already done duty for some time as infantry, the Lucknow Cavalry Brigade being employed in the Ypres salient in June 1915 and having some sharp fighting at Hooge, in the course of which it retook the stables near Hooge Chateau and suffered over 100 casualties. Then in July the Corps moved south to the newly taken over line on the Somme and held a section of trenches opposite Thiepval for nearly two months, having close on 250 more casualties. In the winter of 1915–16 each division organized a Pioneer battalion for dismounted work and these were constantly employed, mainly to supply digging parties for work on trenches or on roads, with an occasional brush with the enemy when up in the front line. With the opening of the offensive on the Somme it seemed that the chance for real cavalry work might come, and both divisions[1] were held in readiness for the eagerly anticipated break through. That break through was never quite achieved, but when, on July 14th, it came nearest to being realized it was part of the 2nd Indian

[1] The Corps had been broken up in March 1916, the 1st Indian Cavalry Division being attached to the 3rd Army, and the 2nd to the 4th, while in June, 1916, the Meerut Cavalry Brigade returned to India en route to Mesopotamia, the 18th Lancers being transferred to the Ambala Cavalry Brigade in exchange with the 30th Lancers.

Cavalry Division that actually came into action mounted. The 7th Division, who in the morning had captured the two Bazentins and the adjacent woods, advanced in the afternoon against High Wood, and the Secunderabad Brigade moved forward on its right flank, the 20th Deccan Horse on the right, the 7th Dragoon Guards on the left. Both regiments pushed on some way, riding down a certain number of Germans hidden in the standing corn and inflicting a good many casualties on them; one charge by a squadron of the 7th Dragoon Guards resulted in the capture of over 30 Germans while another score were speared. However, machine guns from Delville Wood and from trenches East of High Wood held up the advance, many horses being hit, and in the end the brigade fell back to the line on which the infantry had halted and were consolidating. It had had 100 casualties in all.

Two months later the 19th Lancers of the Sialkot Brigade had a brisk action with some Germans. A squadron was pushing forward east of Gueudecourt, trying to exploit the success gained by the big attack of September 25th, when its patrols were held up by the Germans entrenched in a good position. The squadron had about 30 horses shot, but, finding mounted action impossible, dismounted and attacked with vigour, driving the Germans out of their position and inflicting many casualties on them. They then occupied the German position and retained it till infantry arrived to relieve them. However, the Somme offensive came to an end without a real chance for cavalry action, and the winter of 1916–17 saw the Indian horsemen once again forming Pioneer battalions and doing duty on road-making and trench-repairing. These battalions and the Divisional machine gun squadrons were kept busy enough, but theirs was not work which gave many chances of distinction. Then in the spring of 1917 came the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line, and again it seemed that the chance for the cavalry had come. Both divisions [1] were pushed forward on the chance of such activities, the 4th to the area north of the Ancre, the 5th to that near Peronne. But the Germans were retreating 'according to plan'; their leisurely and deliberate retirement presented a very different aspect to what might have been seen had Sir Douglas Haig's

[1] In October 1916 they had been renumbered as the 4th and 5th Cavalry Divisions.

original plan for 1917 been allowed to be carried out. Instead of an enemy retiring in disorder the cavalry found themselves confronted with wire and machine guns in carefully prepared positions and could do little. Both divisions had a good many casualties and nothing much to show for it, though Hodson's Horse and the 18th Lancers had some sharp fighting near Roisel and Villers Faucon. During the summer of 1917 both divisions were once more called upon to do duty in the trenches as infantry, and from May to July were holding a portion of the British front opposite the Hindenburg Line from the Omignon river northwards. They had an active time and beat off several German raids and minor attacks—the 29th Lancers distinguishing themselves by their steadiness under a heavy bombardment when in line near Cologne Farm in June and by the success with which they repulsed the attack which followed the shelling. Moreover, they made not a few successful raids of their own. The 20th Deccan Horse had a very sharp fight as they were coming back from one such raid; in No Man's Land they encountered a large party of Germans who threatened to cut them off but were dispersed by a prompt charge. Hodson's Horse also made one most successful raid, killing or taking the whole garrison of a German redoubt at a cost of three casualties. When finally relieved from this duty, which if unfamiliar was at least a break in the monotony of grooming horses and preparing for a break through which never came, the Indian Divisions were congratulated by the relieving troops on the excellent condition in which they left their trenches, and they could equally congratulate themselves on having more than held their own with the Germans opposite them.

The great 'tank attack' of November 20th at Cambrai seemed at last to have made the opening for which the cavalry had so long waited, and the 5th Cavalry Division actually pushed up to the canal between Masnières and Marcoing, hoping to get across at that point, pass east of Cambrai, and seize the passage of the Sensée near Paillencourt. But it could not even carry out the first stage in this ambitious programme; one squadron of the Secunderabad Brigade got across near Marcoing only to find the enemy still holding the Masnières–Beaurevoir line. The bridges over the canal were either broken down or under heavy and accurate fire, and it proved impossible

to get any force of cavalry over.[1] The next day German counter-attacks began and the division had to be withdrawn, not before portions of the Ambala Brigade had done good service in assisting to hold Noyelles against the German effort to recover it. The 4th Cavalry Division in like manner came up on November 24th, ready to exploit any success that might be gained by the attack on Bourlon Wood, but had also to retire to a back area disappointed. But the Cambrai battle was to give the Indian cavalry their hardest fight in France. When on November 30th the great German counter-stroke broke through the three weak and tired divisions which had been holding the British right since November 20th, the two Indian Cavalry Divisions were both at hand. The 4th was near Athies, actually preparing to relieve part of the 24th Division in line near Hargicourt, the 5th was at Monchy Lagache. The 5th was at once called up to Villers Faucon and ordered to attack in flank the enemy who had broken through near Villers Guislain and had occupied Gouzeaucourt. The Ambala Brigade therefore moved forwards towards Gauche Wood, which lies west of Villers Guislain and south-east of Gouzeaucourt, while the Secunderabad Brigade followed on the left. North of Peizière the Ambala Brigade got in touch with some infantry and pushing through them advanced mounted against Gauche Wood. It came under heavy machine-gun fire from south of Gouzeaucourt, and its leading regiment, the 8th Hussars, was checked. However, supported by Hodson's Horse they forged ahead, got into some enemy holding a sunken road and after a sharp fight secured this line. Advancing again from this road on foot, the brigade met a German counter-attack coming forward and, though prevented from making further progress itself, managed to bring the Germans to a standstill. Meanwhile the Secunderabad Brigade had reached Gouzeaucourt to find that that village had just been retaken by a most gallant advance by the 1st Guards Brigade, whose left was in the air north of Gouzeaucourt Station. The 7th Dragoon Guards were therefore pushed forward to cover the flank and connect up with the 20th Division, south of Villers Plouich, while patrols were sent out to reconnoitre Gonnelieu, which was found

[1] For the operations of the Canadian Cavalry Brigade which had replaced the Meerut Brigade in the division in the autumn of 1916 cf. vol. ii, pp. 111–12 and 219 &c.

to be too well defended by wire and machine guns for a mounted attack to stand any chance of success. Still touch was established with the 20th Division and to the right also a line was made good, connecting up with the Ambala Brigade south of Gauche Wood, while further to the right the Canadian Cavalry Brigade was pushed up towards Villers Guislain and the Lucknow Brigade from the 4th Cavalry Division was placed under the G.O.C. 5th Cavalry Division to protect the flank and connect up with infantry nearer Peizière. Thus, if Gauche Wood had not been retaken, the arrival of the 5th Cavalry Division had certainly helped materially to patch the gap in the line and save a most critical situation. The 4th Cavalry Division meanwhile, whose move had been greatly delayed by the necessity for cancelling a relief already in progress, had come up in the course of the afternoon to Villers Faucon and was in readiness to support the 5th.

But the situation was none too satisfactory: the recapture of Gauche Wood was imperative if Gonnelieu was to be retaken, and without Gonnelieu and Welsh Ridge the position of the British troops in the salient made on November 20th would be most perilous. Orders were therefore issued to the 5th Cavalry Division to attack the line Villers Guislain–Gauche Wood early on December 1st, co-operating with a fresh advance by the Guards against Gauche Wood. The Lucknow Brigade was to co-operate with the 5th Cavalry Division, the rest of the 4th to assemble in support west of Peizière. In the 5th Cavalry Division it was the Ambala Brigade which was to attack Gauche Wood, and at 7.15 a.m. the 18th Lancers and Hodson's Horse advanced dismounted to the attack, the Guards advancing on their left and a little ahead of them. This attack was a complete success. Before 8 a.m. the wood had been cleared, over 300 prisoners taken, 50 by the two Indian regiments, with three field guns and many machine guns. This was followed up by an advance of Hodson's Horse reinforced by the 7th Dragoon Guards of the Secunderabad Brigade on the left to fill a gap north-east of Gauche Wood and assist the attack of the Guards on Gonnelieu. About the same time the Lucknow Brigade had started to advance from Vaucellette Farm against Villers Guislain, but the tanks which should have co-operated with it did not appear and its advance was soon held up by machine-gun fire. Accordingly

orders were issued to the 4th Cavalry Division to put in the Mhow Brigade east of Peizière to attack Villers Guislain from the south-east, the Sialkot Brigade to support. Here also tanks should have co-operated but did not turn up. Nevertheless the Mhow Brigade moved forward mounted, 2nd Lancers on the right, Inniskillings on the left, the 38th Central India Horse supporting. The 2nd Lancers were to move over ground rather less exposed to machine-gun fire than the route assigned to the Inniskillings and were therefore to start first and to form a defensive flank and cover the advance of the other regiment. They went forward in fine style and despite machine-gun fire from Kildare Trench in their front and from both flanks they reached Kildare Trench, cleared it of Germans and opened covering fire. The Inniskillings were less fortunate; they came under heavy fire and as their leading squadron was galloping past the end of Targelle Ravine it was counter-attacked in force, most of its horses were shot down and it was surrounded and almost completely wiped out, the supporting squadron, too far behind to be able to help, having to fall back. This left the 2nd Lancers, with whom was one squadron of the Inniskillings, somewhat in the air on the left, but two squadrons of the Central India Horse managed to get forward to a position just south-west of Pigeon Ravine where they to some extent covered the flank. The Germans, however, made no attempt to counter-attack and in the meantime the Guards had made progress north of Gauche Wood and had greatly improved the position even though they had not actually retaken Gonnelieu. South of Gauche Wood there was a nasty bend in the line: the Germans were still established at Chapel Crossing and it was arranged that the Canadian Cavalry and Lucknow Brigades should attack at 3 p.m. and try to straighten out this bend. They went forward accordingly: the Canadians advanced against Chapel Crossing which they took, though pushing on beyond they were driven back by a counter-attack, while the Lucknow Brigade which aimed at reaching the beet factory on the Villers Guislain road made a little progress but could not gain their objective. Once again therefore the attacks of the cavalry had failed to do all that had been hoped, but they had at least had the effect of putting a stop to the German progress and of winning back valuable ground. It was largely due to their efforts that the highly

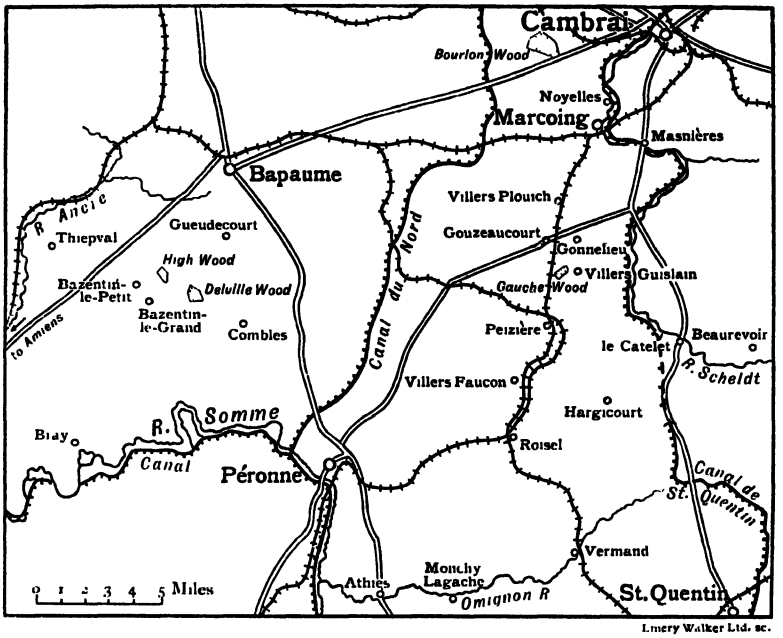
dangerous situation which had faced the British command on the morning of November 30th had been to some degree rectified and that the disaster which had threatened the 3rd Army had been averted. The fight had been a costly one, the total casualties in the two divisions came to little short of 500, but Cambrai had given the Indian cavalry a chance of showing their mettle, even if under rather unfavourable circumstances. The Guards appreciated highly the assistance given by the Indian cavalry in retaking Gauche Wood and were much impressed in particular with the dash and fighting spirit shown by the 18th Lancers and with the skill and resourcefulness of that regiment, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Corbyn, who was killed while superintending the putting of the wood into a state of defence. In token of their appreciation the 2nd Grenadiers presented the regiment with a Grenadier Bugle, the Lancers in return giving the battalion a silver statuette representing a mounted 18th Lancer.

Shortly after the end of the Cambrai fighting—the Secunderabad Brigade which had relieved the Guards in Gauche Wood had had the satisfaction of beating off a counter-attack on the night of December 1st/2nd—orders were issued for the transfer of the Indian cavalry units to Egypt. The urgent character of the 'man-power' situation and to a certain extent the difficulty of providing shipping for forage were the reasons for this. The Cavalry Corps was being cut down to three divisions, some units were temporarily being dismounted and used as machine gunners, and the Yeomanry whom the Indian cavalry were to relieve in the Near East were destined for a similar employment. February therefore saw the beginning of the transfer, and long before the German attack of March 21st, 1918, of which the Cambrai counter-attack had been but a foretaste, the Indian cavalry units had left the Western Front. The British regiments with whom they had been brigaded, the R.H.A., R.E., and other units attached to the Indian Cavalry Divisions, remained in France, as did the Canadian Cavalry Brigade and the staff of the 4th Cavalry Division; that of the 5th proceeded to the new theatre where the names of the 4th and 5th Cavalry Divisions were to reappear.[1]

The departure of the cavalry divisions did not leave India entirely unrepresented on the Western Front. Not only were

[1] Cf. pp. 124 and 272–3 note.

there many labour units, of which some mention has already been made, but a certain amount had been done since the autumn of 1917 in the way of substituting Indian for British personnel in Divisional Ammunition Columns and in the A.S.C., thus rendering the men relieved available for fighting purposes. Hence even in the last critical stages on the Western Front, India was contributing to the overthrow of the Central Powers, not as vitally or directly as in the great crisis of 1914, nor to the extent or importance of her contribution by relieving British troops in Palestine, but still making a tangible contribution not to be overlooked.

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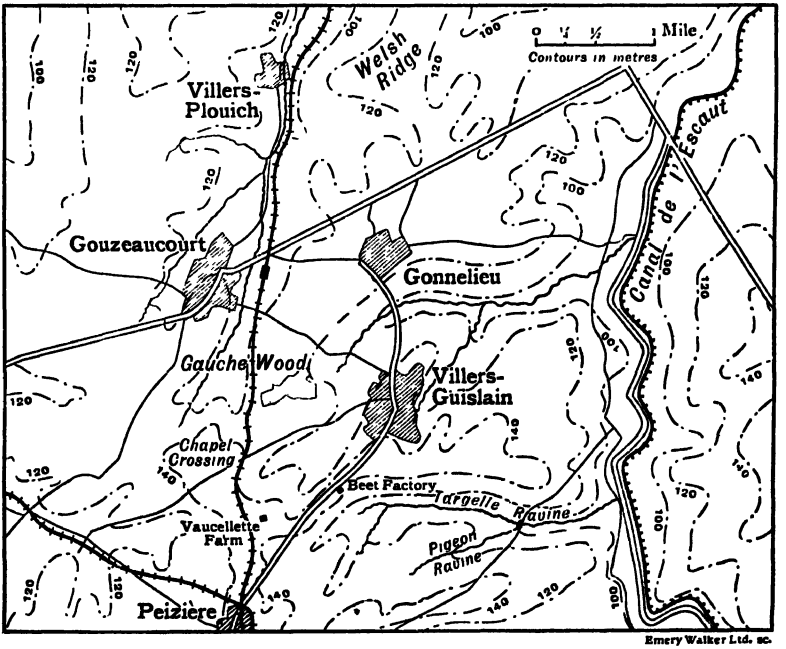


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INDIAN CAVALRY OPERATIONS, 1917.

# CHAPTER VI

## THE NEAR EAST: EGYPT AND GALLIPOLI

TURKEY entered the war in November 1914, and on her entry we had to assume that an attack would be made upon the Suez Canal, for, whether the Turks wished it or no, it was certain that the Germans would goad them on to attack the Canal.

The Suez Canal is the main artery of the British Empire. Sever it, and the Empire would bleed to death. To secure it at all costs was essential, India had a special interest in the matter, and to ensure its safety and that of Egypt was the task originally proposed for the Lahore and Meerut Divisions. This was well before the Turks became open enemies. From the very outbreak of the war the attitude of Turkey gave rise to great anxiety in view of her close relations with Germany, and Lord Kitchener himself, having for so long served in Egypt and India, was keenly alive to the danger. At a very early stage in the war he dispatched Lieutenant-General Sir John Maxwell to command the forces in Egypt and prepare against eventualities. General Maxwell had served for more than thirty years in Egypt and knew its problems well. He had, he was well aware, to prepare to defend Egypt from attacks from other quarters than the Canal, from east and west and south, but it was from Syria that by far the most serious attack might be expected, and against it he had to make preparation well beforehand.

As has been said, originally it was intended to garrison the Canal with the Lahore and Meerut Divisions, but the urgency of the position on the French front in the autumn of 1914 necessitated their being sent on to France. The Lahore Division which had arrived in Egypt early in September made therefore but a short stay there, re-embarking on September 19th for Marseilles. It left one of its three infantry brigades, the Sirhind Brigade, behind, together with a brigade of mountain artillery who would have been specially useful in the early days of 'trench warfare' could they have proceeded to France. It was on these units of the Indian Army

that the task of guarding the Canal devolved, for shortly after the arrival of the Lahore Division the British Regulars usually stationed in Egypt were withdrawn, to take their places in the 7th, 8th, and 3rd Cavalry Divisions, the first improvised divisions to be added to the original B.E.F. In relief of these Regular units there arrived in Egypt before the end of September the 42nd (East Lancashire Territorial) Division, but the brunt of the work of protecting the Canal fell on the Indian Army, and in October orders were issued from Army Headquarters at Simla for the provision of a really considerable force of Indian troops for this purpose. On October 10th some twenty Indian infantry battalions were warned for service overseas; on October 17th Major-Generals Sir G. Younghusband, H. V. Cox, and Sir C. Melliss, V.C., were appointed to the command of three brigades, afterwards numbered 28th (Frontier Force), 29th, and 30th, which were to proceed forthwith to Egypt. Subsequently another two brigades were organized, numbered 22nd and 31st, and to them was added a third, numbered 32nd and composed in the main of Imperial Service Infantry.[1] At the same time the Bikaner Camel Corps and two regiments of Imperial Service Cavalry, the Mysore and Hyderabad Lancers, were ordered to Egypt. The arrival of the first instalment of these reinforcements allowed the Sirhind Brigade to proceed to France where, as has been told,[2] it joined the Lahore Division in the trenches near Givenchy early in December. Before the end of 1914 it was decided to organize the Indian troops in Egypt into two divisions, the 28th, 29th, and 30th Brigades forming the 10th Indian Division under Major-General A. Wilson, the 22nd, 31st, and 32nd forming the 11th Indian Division under Major-General Wallace.[3] These divisions were, however, far from complete; they were without any other artillery than the two batteries of mountain artillery; they had no divisional cavalry, no Sappers and Miners, and no signal companies; they could not have undertaken offensive operations for lack of transport even if their establishments had otherwise been complete. However, they supplied what was essential for the protection of the Canal, and covered by these Indian Regulars the East Lancashire Territorials and

[1] The units were the Alwar, Gwalior, and Patiala battalions. [2] See p 213.

[3] These forces had hitherto been known as I.E.F. 'F' and I.E.F. 'E' respectively.

the new levies of Australia and New Zealand, who had by this time arrived in Egypt, could concentrate upon completing their training.

The Turks, as is described in another part of this volume,[1] had lost little time in organizing an attempt to attack the Canal, and this was important to India because it gave not a few units of the Indian Army a chance of distinction. Towards the end of November a patrol of the Bikaner Camel Corps had drawn first blood in a sharp action against a greatly superior force of Bedouins and Turks near Bir el Nus, extricating itself skilfully from a difficult position into which a treacherous use of the white flag had entrapped it.

About the middle of January 1915 the mounted troops attached to the Canal defences began to get touch with Turks advancing in some force, and on January 26th our outposts at Qantara, held by detachments of General Cox's 29th Brigade, were engaged by the enemy whom they beat off. Further attempts to advance against this portion of our defences, none of them very seriously pressed, were disposed of with ease, and it was clear that this, like another attack on the El Kubri post on the right or Suez section of the defences, was merely a feint to conceal the real attack which was delivered against the centre of the line between Lake Timsah and the Great Bitter Lake. Here the line was held by the 22nd Brigade (62nd and 92nd Punjabis and 2/10th Gurkhas with 2nd Rajputs attached) who were supported by a Lancashire Territorial battery and by another from the Egyptian Army. Contact with the enemy was established on February 1st, and after some desultory fighting on February 2nd the Turks made their main effort on the early morning of February 3rd, pushing forward with much determination against a point 2,000 yards south of Tussum. They managed not only to reach the Canal but to launch boats and even effect a landing on the western bank. Here their success ended; the two parties who had got across were promptly counter-attacked by detachments of the 62nd Punjabis and killed or taken to a man, a few who had concealed themselves under the bank being mopped up after daybreak by the 2nd Rajputs. Moreover, when it became light the commander of the 22nd Brigade set four companies of the 2nd Rajputs and 2/10th Gurkhas in

[1] See above, pp. 51–65.

motion to clear the east bank, which resulted in the enemy retiring in large numbers from some broken ground near the Canal in which they had been sheltering. About the same time a Turkish force advanced in strength against our post at Serapeum, but was brought to a standstill by a counter-attack delivered by two companies of the 92nd Punjabis supported by parties of the 2nd Rajputs and 2/10th Gurkhas. The action here resulted in the retirement of the Turks and the capture by local counter-attacks of nearly 300 prisoners. Next morning General Wallace, who had come up with reinforcements from the 31st Brigade and taken command of the Serapeum section, ordered a move to be made to clear the east bank of the Canal, from which sniping was going on, though the main body of the Turks had disappeared. A sharp fight followed, ending in a dashing charge by the 92nd Punjabis supported by parties of the 27th and 62nd and of the 128th Pioneers, in the capture of nearly another 300 Turks, and the death of a German officer, Major von der Hagen. It was the last of the fighting; the Turks had had enough, and all along the line they were reported to be in retreat. The Imperial Service Cavalry moved out eastwards after them and picked up a certain number of prisoners, but nothing of the nature of a serious pursuit could be attempted, and the Turks were left to the painful process of a hasty retreat across the desert. Their attack on the Canal, though skilfully conducted and gallantly pressed, had been decisively defeated, and it was not likely that after such an experience it would be renewed in the near future. For want of transport and of artillery fitted for a pursuit across the desert it had been impossible to follow up the Turkish repulse by the counter-stroke in which a successful defence should culminate, but the achievement of the units of the Indian Army by whom the great bulk of the fighting had been done was of no mean strategical importance. The political situation in Egypt was very greatly improved, and the threat to the Canal had been dissipated. For the rest of 1916 there was to be no serious fighting in Egypt, though several minor affairs took place in February, March, and April in which some sharp blows were administered to the enemy. Constant patrolling was necessary, more than once the Turks attempted to lay mines in the Canal, and the work of the troops in the Canal defences was laborious and incessant. But the main

result of the action of February 3rd–4th was to render the bulk of the forces in Egypt available for service elsewhere should occasion arise.

The occasion was not slow to present itself. In March the 30th Brigade under General Melliss was detailed to proceed to Mesopotamia where reinforcements were urgently needed, and then with the opening in April 1915 of the military operations against the Dardanelles there came more calls on the garrison of Egypt. On April 26th the 29th Indian Brigade left for Gallipoli, the two Indian mountain batteries having already preceded it. When early in May the East Lancashire Territorials also left Egypt for Gallipoli the responsibility for the defence of Egypt fell more than ever on the two Indian Divisions, but the calls on them continued. Some half a dozen battalions left for France or Gallipoli to relieve tired units in those theatres of war.[1] In July the unsatisfactory character of the situation at Aden necessitated the dispatch thither of the 28th (Frontier Force) Brigade under Sir G. Younghusband.[2] Considerable claims for drafts were made by the 29th Brigade on the Gallipoli Peninsula—at one time two double companies from the Patiala Sikhs left to replenish the depleted ranks of the 14th Sikhs—and, as the total strength of the force was now down to four brigades, it was decided to amalgamate the two divisions under one command.

One reason for the failure of the Turks to renew their attacks on the Canal was that they were too hard pressed at Gallipoli and had all they could do to keep the British at bay there. To these operations the Indian Army contributed, as already stated, one infantry brigade and two batteries of mountain artillery. This brigade, the 29th, was commanded by Major-General H. V. Cox,[3] and on landing it consisted of the 14th Sikhs, the 69th and 89th Punjabis, and the 1/6th Gurkhas.[4] None of the infantry took part in the first landing, but the two batteries were brought on shore immediately after the Australians on the 25th of April 1915 and shared in the desperate

See p. 183 and notes. [2] See p. 140.

[3] Afterwards General Sir H. Vaughan Cox, G.C.B., K.C.M.G., C.S.I. After his service in Gallipoli he commanded the 4th Australian Division in Egypt and France in 1916–17 and in 1917 was appointed Secretary to the Military Department of the India Office.

[4] On May 14th the two Punjabi battalions were ordered to France and were replaced from Egypt by the 1/5th and 2/10th Gurkhas.

and successful struggle to keep hold of the positions originally won.

The infantry brigade landed at Helles on May 1st at a time when the Turks were making determined counter-attacks and striving with all their might to throw their assailants back into the sea. For the moment the brigade was held in reserve, but a few days later it was attached to the famous 29th Division which was commanded by General de Lisle.

During the second great effort against Krithia of May 6th–8th the brigade was in reserve, and at the end of the battle it took over the left of the British line between Gully Ravine and the sea. Here Turkish resistance had been very stubborn, the key to the position being what was afterwards known as Gurkha Bluff. The enemy's right rested on the steep cliff north-east of 'Y' beach, and since the first landing the bluff had been converted into a powerful bastion from which the fire of machine guns had held up the left of our attacks. Two gallant attempts to establish a footing on this cliff on the 8th and 9th of May had both failed, and during the night of 10th–11th May the 1/6th Gurkhas started off to reconnoitre and if possible to seize this bluff. Their scouts descended to the sea, worked their way for some distance through the broken ground along the shore, and crawled on hands and knees up the precipitous face of the cliff. As a surprise the enterprise failed, but as a reconnaissance it proved most useful.

On the following day General Cox submitted plans for a concerted attack on this bluff, and arrangements were made with the Navy for co-operation. The arrangements were completed on the 12th May; they included effective fire on the far side of the Gully Ravine by the 89th Punjabis who had not yet left for France, a demonstration by the Manchester Brigade of the 42nd Division and by our artillery, and the support of the guns of H.M.S. *Dublin* and H.M.S. *Talbot*. At 6.30 p.m. on the 12th of May the Manchester Brigade and the artillery opened fire, and under cover of this fire a double company of the 1/6th Gurkhas once more crept along the shore and assembled below the bluff. Then, the attention of the Turks being taken up with the bombardment, they swiftly scaled the cliffs and carried the work with a rush. The machine-gun section of the Gurkhas was hurried forward, and at

4.30 a.m. a second double company was pushed up to join the first.

An hour later these two double companies extended and began to entrench. At 6 a.m. a third double company advanced across the open from their former front line of trenches under a heavy rifle and machine-gun fire, and established themselves between the main ravine on their right and the newly captured redoubt. The remaining double company moved up as a support and held the former firing-line, and at the same time a company of the 89th Punjabis pushed forward on the far side of the ravine.

Our left flank was thus advanced 500 yards, and a fine example was given of what might be done by well-thought-out and properly co-ordinated plans and by bold and skilful leadership. The commanding officer of the Gurkhas who had achieved this remarkable success was Colonel Hon. C. G. Bruce,[1] an officer well known in the Indian Army both for his knowledge of the Gurkhas and for his resourcefulness and dash. There were several counter-attacks during the night of the 13th/14th, and on the next night the 14th Sikhs also made a small advance, bringing up the right of the line.

For the remainder of May the Indian troops held their portion of the line with some sharp fighting of the trench warfare kind, in which both the 1/6th Gurkhas and the 14th Sikhs distinguished themselves, and on June 4th the whole Brigade took part in the general assault which was made upon the Krithia position. The object was the capture of the enemy's defences from Kereves Dere to the Aegean. The Indian Brigade was on the extreme left of the line with its flank on the sea, forming the left brigade of the 29th Division. Opening at 8 a.m. the bombardment of the Turkish position was kept up with intervals till noon, when along the whole line the infantry fixed bayonets and advanced. Unfortunately that portion of the enemy's line in front of the Indian Brigade had suffered little damage from our bombardment, and the barbed-wire obstacle was intact. The result was that, though the 14th Sikhs on the right flank pushed on well, the centre of the brigade could make no headway, and the Sikhs, exposed on both flanks and counter-attacked in force, were cut to pieces,

[1] General Bruce afterwards added to his distinction by leading the Mount Everest expedition of 1922.

losing two-thirds of their effectives. A company of the 1/6th Gurkhas on the left, skilfully led along the cliffs by its commander, actually forced its way into a Turkish work, but the failure of the rest of the brigade threatened isolation and it was as skilfully withdrawn under fire.[1]

Elsewhere along the line a considerable advance had been made at first, but the Turks by a counter-attack had forced the French and ourselves to retire from much of the ground we had won, and though some gains of ground were retained, as a whole the attack had failed to achieve its purpose.

However, despite its losses there was little rest or respite for the Indian brigade, which remained in position on the left of the British line for another five weeks. The early part of this period was marked by no outstanding incident, though minor activities were incessant and the casualty list mounted steadily. Then on June 28th came the highly successful attack by the 29th Division between Gully Ravine and the sea, and on that followed some of the hardest fighting the brigade saw on the peninsula. After the 86th and 87th Brigades had made their advance the Gurkhas pushed forward by the beach and cliffs round the Turkish flank and took over the most advanced of the captured trenches. They were promptly counter-attacked in force and for two days there was incessant fighting. Bits of the trenches were lost, regained, lost again, retaken. Time after time the Gurkhas, using bomb and kukri with great effect, drove back the Turks with much loss, and in the end after suffering extremely heavily the Turks desisted from attacking and left the disputed trenches in the keeping of Cox's brigade. But the Gurkha losses had been heavy,[2] and by the end of the first week of July the brigade had been fought to a standstill: nearly all the British officers were casualties, and the men, who had lost nearly 600 all told, were utterly exhausted. Relief was imperative, and on July 10th the brigade left Cape Helles for Imbros where it was to enjoy nearly a month's rest. During this time a good many drafts arrived, including, as already mentioned,[3] a strong detachment from the Patiala

[1] The total losses of the 29th Indian Brigade in this action were over 600, including 20 British officers, and the Sikhs, who had nearly 400 casualties, were reduced to 3 British officers and 200 Indian officers and men.

[2] The 14th Sikhs, as was natural after their losses of June 4th, played only a minor part in this fighting.

[3] See above, p. 246.

Imperial Service Infantry for the 14th Sikhs, and the beginning of August found the brigade pretty well up to strength, though the majority of the newly arrived officers came from other units and were strangers to the men under them, a heavy handicap to an Indian unit.

To the Indian brigade, thus rested and brought up to strength, was now to fall their culminating experience in the great Gallipoli venture. Sir Ian Hamilton was to make his supreme effort to cut off the Turkish Army from communication with Constantinople and win a passage for the British Fleet up the Dardanelles, and to the Indian brigade was allotted the honourable task of assaulting the actual summit of the ridge—the Sari Bair Ridge—which dominated the peninsula at its vital point.

Attacks were to be made at Helles and at Suvla Bay. But these were to be complementary operations. The attack by the Australians and New Zealanders from Anzac was to be, in Sir Ian's words, 'the knock-down blow; and to these troops the Indian brigade and an Indian mountain battery were attached. The whole were to be under the command of General Sir William Birdwood, an officer of the Indian Army who had been taken by Lord Kitchener from India to command the Australians and New Zealanders.

The troops under Birdwood's direct command amounted in round numbers to about 35,000 rifles and 72 guns, with naval support from two cruisers, four monitors, and two destroyers. The attack was to be made on the night of the 6th/7th August, by which date reinforcements from England for the other attacks would have arrived and by which date also the moon would be low. On the nights of the 4th/5th and 5th/6th August reinforcements were shipped into Anzac very silently in the darkest hours, and tucked away in their prepared hiding-places out of sight from aeroplanes or observers. Immense efforts had been made to accumulate food, drink, and munitions of war. The provision of water was an especially difficult problem. On the crests of the ridges to be scaled no water at all would be found. The season was the hottest and driest and the assaulting troops must inevitably suffer from thirst. Accommodation had also to be provided for the reinforcing troops in concealed bivouacs. All these preparations were completed, and on the appointed date the attack from

Anzac began and simultaneously the IXth Corps began its disembarkation at Suvla Bay.

The role assigned to Anzac was to storm the Sari Bair Ridge. The 29th Indian Infantry Brigade were, with the 4th Australian Infantry Brigade, the 21st (Kohat) Indian Mountain Battery and one company of New Zealand Engineers, to form the left assaulting column under the command of Major-General H. V. Cox. They were to work up the Aghyl Dere (a ravine about 2 miles to the north of Anzac Cove) and to assault Hill 305 (Koja Chemen Tepe) the highest point of the whole Sari Bair Ridge.

On the night of the 6th August this left assaulting column made its way along the foot-hills of Ocean Beach and entered the Aghyl Dere Ravine in the early hours of the 7th. The surprise on this side was complete; the enemy's arms and ammunition were scattered in every direction. But the darkness of the night, the density of the scrub, the difficulties of scrambling about precipitous hill-sides made progress slow and caused much exhaustion to the troops, who found themselves at daybreak some way short of the points they had hoped to reach. After advancing some distance up the Aghyl Dere the column had divided, the 1/5th and 2/10th Gurkhas pushing up a long spur which ran down into the south branch of the Aghyl Dere from a point on the west known as 'Q', while the rest held on for 305. The 4th Australian Brigade struggled, fighting hard as they went, up the north fork of the Aghyl Dere. Unfortunately the guide to the column had lost his bearings, and in consequence mistakes were made both as to the positions reached and as to the points attacked.

It was about 4 a.m. when the 1/5th and 2/10th Gurkhas diverged from the main column and began pushing up the spurs leading to Hill Q. They soon encountered serious resistance but steadily gained ground, while on their left the 1/6th Gurkhas followed by the 14th Sikhs began to climb another intermediate spur. They, too, were stoutly opposed, and by 7 a.m. the report came back to brigade head-quarters that the 1/5th Gurkhas were hung up on a subsidiary spur, unable to get on in face of the fire coming from the enemy on the top of the main ridge. On their left were some of the 2/10th Gurkhas and of the 14th Sikhs mixed up with the 4th Australian Brigade, to their right more of the 2/10th

Gurkhas and the 1/6th Gurkhas, who had got over to this flank, while a few 1/5th Gurkhas had climbed up the main Chunuk Bair Ridge but had got too far to the south and were near the Farm, one of the few well-marked points in the blind and difficult tangle of spurs and ravines. Here too the advance had been brought to a standstill by the heavy fire poured into it from the crest of the ridge. The delay in the advance had allowed the Turks to bring up their reserves and the opposition had hardened. The attack of our right assaulting column had also, by 9 a.m., been checked, and any further advance on Koja Chemen Tepe had to be, for the moment, suspended. The 4th Australian Brigade also had been checked and had failed to reach its objective.

However, the New Zealanders were not to be checked, and at 9.30 a.m. they again pressed forward whilst our guns pounded the enemy moving along Battleship Hill. But their efforts were without avail. The enemy were gathering in strength and the men were exhausted. They managed to secure the ground known as Rhododendron Ridge just below the crest of Chunuk Bair, and here most of the 2/10th Gurkhas were able to join them, but the utmost the troops could do was to cling to what they had captured and make ready for the night. The help they had looked for from the Suvla Bay attack was not forthcoming.

The hope and intention of reaching the all-important summit had, however, by no means been abandoned. During the afternoon of the 7th August a reconnaissance of Sari Bair was carried out, and the troops were organized for a fresh advance in three columns to take place early on the morning of the 8th. The right column,[1] under Brigadier-General F. E. Johnston, was to climb up the Chunuk Bair Ridge. The left column (which with the centre column was commanded by Major-General Cox) was to make for the prolongation of the ridge north-east to Koja Chemen Tepe. In this new attack the 2/10th Gurkhas, followed by two battalions of the 39th Brigade, were to advance up a spur which ran just north of the Farm; the 1/6th were to head another column directed against Point 'Q', while farther to the left the 1/5th and

[1] The 26th Indian Mountain Battery accompanied the right column and did good service in spite of the greatest difficulties. The 21st Indian Mountain Battery was with General Cox.

the 14th Sikhs were to make for a point on the crest just east of 'Q', keeping touch with the 4th Australian Brigade which was again attacking Abd er Rahman Bair.

The attack was timed for 4.15 a.m. The right column, the Wellington Battalion of the New Zealand Brigade supported by the 7th Gloucesters, mounted the slopes of Chunuk Bair, and though suffering fearful losses attained and kept the summit. In the centre hardly enough time had been allowed for the troops to reach their assaulting positions: the darkness and the ground had caused great delays and only the 1/6th Gurkhas were in place at 4.15. But when the success of the Wellingtons and 7th Gloucesters was realized the centre columns did their best to get forward. They came under a deadly fire from the upper slopes of Chunuk Bair, lost heavily, and were unable to gain the ridge. The 14th Sikhs, indeed, were heavily counter-attacked, apparently by part of the counter-stroke which thrust the 4th Australian Brigade back to its starting-line, and once again the attack was checked, leaving the 2/10th and 1/6th Gurkhas mixed up with the 39th Brigade about level with the Farm, the 1/5th Gurkhas farther north, and the 14th Sikhs beyond them facing more to their left towards the heights beyond the Asmak Dere.

In the afternoon the battle slackened, and plans were made for yet another grand attack, when full use would be made of the advantage we had gained by the capture of Chunuk Bair, where the Wellingtons and 7th Gloucesters had managed to retain their hard-won footing. The main attack was to be delivered by five fresh battalions under General Baldwin which were to move up to Rhododendron Spur and attack 'Q'. In this attack the 1/6th and 2/10th Gurkhas were to co-operate; they were to advance on Baldwin's left and were to push forward as far as they could under cover of the bombardment and assault directly the guns lifted. The 1/5th Gurkhas and 14th Sikhs were merely to assist by demonstrations.

At 4.30 a.m. on the 9th of August the Chunuk Bair Ridge and Hill Q were heavily shelled. Naval guns and guns from the left and right flank took part in this bombardment which rose to a climax at 5.15 a.m., when it was to lift and play on the slopes. Unfortunately the column under General Baldwin

lost its way in the darkness and at 5.15 three of his battalions were still in the Aghyl Dere and one was only half-way up the slope to the Farm. However, the 1/6th Gurkhas, under Major C. G. L. Allanson, supported by the 6th South Lancashires, had crept forward during the bombardment as ordered, and pushing rapidly up the slopes of the col between Chunuk Bair and Hill Q, carried the position, drove the Turks from their trenches, and saw beneath them some 5 miles distant the waters of the Dardanelles. Not only did they reach the crest but with some of the 6th South Lancashire Regiment they began to attack down the far side of it, firing as they went at the fast-retreating enemy.

But now, just as victory seemed assured, a turn came. At the critical moment the British artillery re-opened fire, and a salvo bursting among the Gurkhas and South Lancashires checked their advance. Immediately the Turks rallied to a counter-attack. Heavy fire from Abd-er-Rahman Bair swept the ridge. Gurkhas and Lancashire men, exhausted by their exertions and want of rest, were forced backwards over the crest and to the lower slopes whence they had first started. Here they were rallied mainly by the exertions of Captain Phipson, the Medical Officer of the Gurkhas, the only British officer left with the battalion.

That evening—the 9th August—our line ran along Rhododendron Spur up to the crest of Chunuk Bair, where about 200 yards were occupied and held by some 800 men. From Chunuk Bair the line ran down to the Farm and almost due north to the Asmak Dere southern watershed, whence it continued westward to the sea near Asmak Kuyu. The 1/5th Gurkhas were still in position on the left of the line with the 1/6th near the Farm; the 14th Sikhs had been withdrawn to reserve and the 2/10th Gurkhas should have moved to the left to reinforce the troops holding Damakjelik Bair, but they had drifted away to the right and were all mixed up with the 13th Division troops round the Farm. At daybreak on the 10th of August the Turks delivered a grand attack, swept over the crest of the Chunuk Bair, and simply overwhelmed the defenders. They attempted to come down the western slopes, but now in their turn they were swept away by our terrific gun and machine-gun fire. At the same time the enemy hurled strong forces against our line farther north, and a desperate

battle here took place.[1] The loss of the advanced position on Chunuk Bair left the 1/6th Gurkhas, with whom were parties of the 2/10th and of the 9th Royal Warwickshires, in a most awkward situation. The ridge here was horse-shoe shaped and the troops were under a converging fire from three sides, while the Turks began to advance down the hill and to threaten to surround the advanced posts held by the Gurkhas. For some time they held on, but the position was untenable and almost impossible to reinforce, and eventually the survivors were forced out of it and driven some way down the hill. But the Turks could not press their advantage, they could not even re-occupy the Farm, and in the end a line was taken up along the lower slopes of Chunuk Bair and held by the 13th Division, the units of the 29th Indian Brigade being taken out, except the 1/5th Gurkhas who remained in their position on the left until the evening of August 12th.

Exhausted and reduced in numbers as the brigade was—its casualties came to nearly a thousand—it was not to get any real relief, for it had to be transferred to the left of the line to connect up the Damakjelik Bair position with the right of the IXth Corps which was near Kazlar Chair. The line here was not very satisfactory, and it was decided to make an attack on the high ground known as Kaiajik Aghala just across the Kaiajik Dere. This was to combine with the renewed attack to be made by the IXth Corps on the Anafarta Hills. One important point to be secured was the Kabak Kuyu Wells, just north of the main tactical feature of the Kaiajik Ridge, the so-called Hill 60. These wells provided an excellent supply of water, and their acquisition would go far to improve the situation in this essential respect. In the attack, delivered on August 21st, the Indian Brigade advanced across the flats from the line Damakjelik Bair–Kazlar Chair, while the 5th Connaught Rangers delivered the actual attack on Kabak Kuyu and some Australians and New Zealanders assaulted Hill 60. The Indian units carried out their task accurately and successfully, took and made good the line ordered, linked up with the Connaught Rangers at the wells and established touch on the left with the IXth Corps just beyond Susuk Kuyu. The operation cost nearly another 200 casualties, the 1/5th and

[1] The New Zealand account of this August fighting does full justice to the Indian troops. See vol. iii, pp. 302–3.

2/10th Gurkhas having 60 and 70 respectively, but the ground gained was most useful and a few nights later the 1/5th Gurkhas shortened the line to be held by pushing forward at night and digging in on a new alinement. It was the last offensive operation of the brigade at the Dardanelles. Many weary weeks of trench warfare were before them, many casualties, much sickness, a monotonous and inactive period. At the end of August the brigade was reinforced by the 1/4th Gurkhas withdrawn from France and nearly 1,000 strong, a welcome reinforcement to its depleted ranks, but this fine battalion was not to be given a chance to add to its laurels at the Dardanelles. Shortly before the main evacuation the 29th Indian Brigade left for Egypt, whence the majority of its units returned to India early in 1916.

The Indian troops left the Gallipoli Peninsula without having had the satisfaction of having taken part in any great victory, though they had scored more than one minor local success. Indeed, the whole British effort had failed in its object of breaking through the Turkish position, freeing the Dardanelles, opening the way to Constantinople, and joining hands with the Russians. The Indians, like the other units who fought in Gallipoli, could console themselves with the thought that they had contributed to the containing and breaking of the flower of the Turkish Army, and so made possible the subsequent victories of Maude and Allenby in Mesopotamia and Syria. It was a curious coincidence that the Indian Brigade should have borne the same number as that of the famous division of British Regulars whose name will always be associated with Gallipoli and by whose side it fought so long. The British Army will always be proud of the achievements of the 29th Division, but the Indian Army may well remember Cox's 29th Indian Brigade with pride; indeed, were they to claim that had a larger Indian contingent been spared from Egypt to be behind the 29th Division on April 25th and 26th, the eventual upshot of the enterprise would have been very different, the suggestion will not be lightly set aside.

As long as the Gallipoli campaign absorbed the attention and energies of the Turkish higher command, Egypt had, as already mentioned, been free from any menace from the eastward. The Indian units who spent the summer of 1915 in Egypt had therefore an uneventful time. The Bikaner Camel

Corps found themselves well occupied with patrol work in Sinai and had several brushes with Bedouins, but the other Indian troops hardly came into contact with any enemy. In November, when the Lahore and Meerut Divisions appeared in the Canal on their way to Mesopotamia, the opportunity was taken to make a good many changes in their composition, substituting fresh or rested battalions for several which had been all through the campaigns in France.[1] Shortly afterwards the arrival in Egypt of the forces employed in Gallipoli did away with the necessity for retaining in Egypt so large an Indian contingent. India had done her part in safeguarding the Canal; she could now put forward an urgent claim for her troops nearer home, for the situation in Mesopotamia was critical and reinforcements were badly needed for the relief of Kut. Accordingly early in 1916 the majority of the Indian units left Egypt, most of them for India, though two, the 40th Pathans and 129th Baluchis, who were followed in July by the 57th Rifles, went to East Africa, in which theatre of war the frontier and trans-frontier tribesmen of whom they were in large measure composed would not be subjected to the peculiar temptations and strains to which service in Mesopotamia would have exposed them, while the 69th Punjabis were sent to Aden. Thus by May 1916 the Indian contingent in Egypt was reduced to four Regular battalions,[2] along with the Imperial Service units originally sent to Egypt in 1914. The organization of this force as the 10th Indian Division had been abolished in March, as so small a contingent did not require a divisional staff, and the 20th (Imperial Service) and 29th Indian Infantry Brigades were attached to the 42nd Division in the Suez section of the Canal defences. The total Indian contingent in Egypt in the latter half of 1916 thus sank to about 8,000 fighting men.

But before this date one of the Indian units in Egypt had seen some sharp fighting and had greatly distinguished itself against a new enemy. The story of the development of trouble

[1] Thus the 6th Jats, 9th Bhopals, 41st Dogras, and 125th Rifles, all original units of the Indian Army Corps, rejoined it while the 2nd Rajputs, 3rd Brahmans and 92nd Punjabis and the 51st and 53rd Sikhs and 56th Rifles of General Younghusband's Frontier Force Brigade, which had returned from Aden, were transferred to it, the ten battalions thus relieved being for the time posted to the 10th Indian Division.

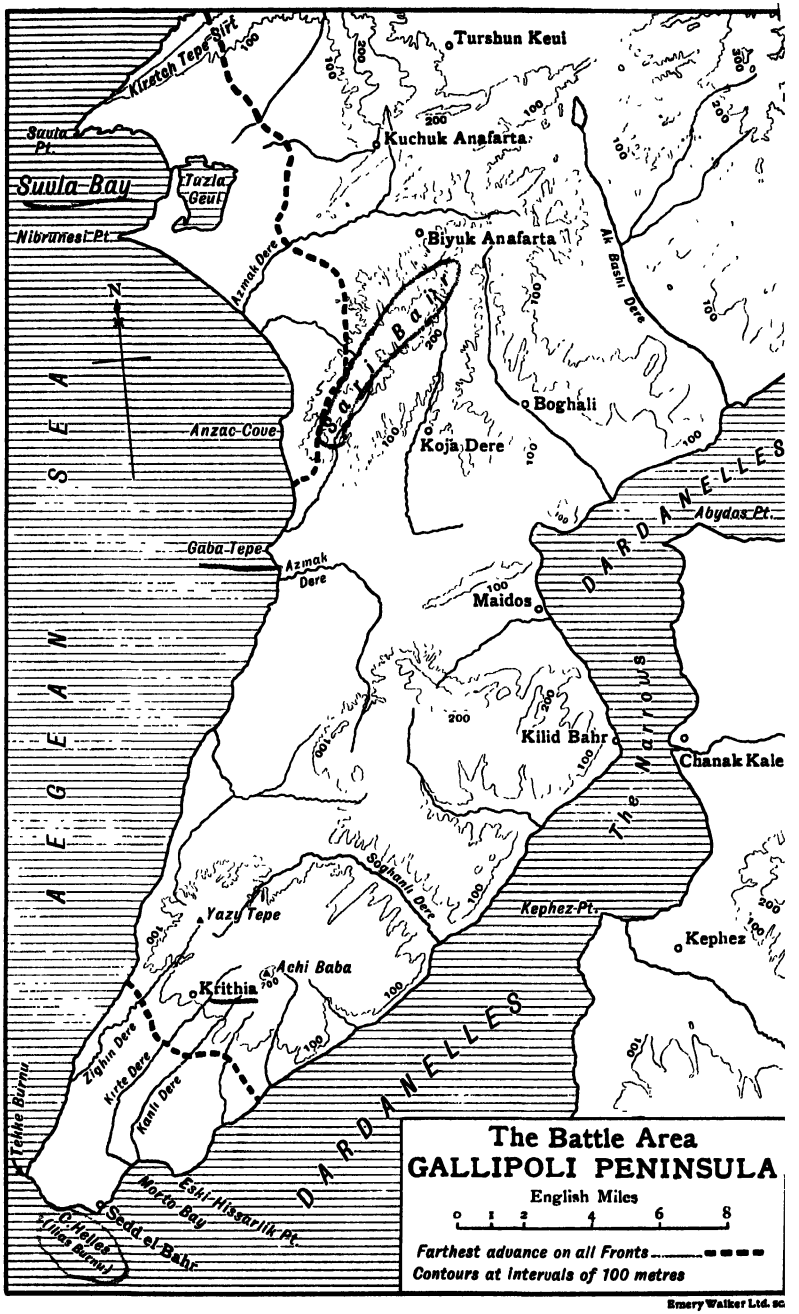
[2] The 1/23rd Pioneers, 57th and 58th Rifles and 2/3rd Gurkhas.

with the Senussi is described in another part of this volume.[1] It was a danger all the more serious because when it became necessary to organize a force to deal with it, with all the thousands of troops in Egypt at that time there were very few units capable of taking the field, the vast majority being drafts, depots, convalescents and hospital patients, administrative units and other details belonging to units at the Dardanelles. With some difficulty a force was assembled at Alexandria in November 1915, consisting of a composite mounted brigade and an infantry brigade in which were included the 15th Sikhs who, after distinguishing themselves in France, had been transferred to Egypt in June. A detachment of the Bikaner Camel Corps also formed part of the force.

The first step in the campaign against the Senussi was the dispatch by sea of the 15th Sikhs under Lieutenant-Colonel J. L. R. Gordon to secure the harbour of Mersa Matruh where the force was to concentrate. This done, after some preliminary reconnaissances which involved some sharp fighting, an advance in force was made on December 25th and the enemy were brought to action at Gebel Medwa.[2] The brunt of this action fell on the 15th Sikhs, who carried out the main attack against the left of the Senussi position and displayed the greatest dash and resolution, overcoming a really serious opposition. They were admirably led by Colonel Gordon and well supported by the New Zealanders, and the action resulted in a severe defeat of the enemy, who lost heavily and had to retire some distance. A month later the advance was renewed, a battalion of the South African Infantry Brigade having been added to the column under Colonel Gordon which included the Sikhs and New Zealanders. A second action on January 23rd was even more stubbornly contested than the earlier fight; the Sikhs, who led the main attack, had to advance over ground devoid of cover against strong positions defended by a vigorous and numerous enemy, who counter-attacked repeatedly and more than once threatened to outflank the attacking line. In the end, however, the discipline, resolution, and gallantry of the attackers prevailed, the enemy's positions were carried, his camp taken and burnt, and heavy losses inflicted upon him.

[1] See above, pp. 66–72.

[2] A battalion of the New Zealand Rifle Brigade and a composite regiment of Australian Light Horse were also included in the column. See above, p. 68.


Turshun Keui
Kuchuk Anafarta
Biyuk Anafarta
Boghali
Koja Dere
Ak Bashi Dere
Kizlah Tepe Dirt
Suvla Pt.
Suvla Bay
Tuzla Geul
Nibrunesi Pt.
Azmak Dere
Anzac Cove
Gaba Tepe
Azmak Dere
Maidos
Abydos Pt.
DARDANELLES
Kilid Bahr
Chanak Kale
The Narrows
Sighali Dere
Kephez Pt.
Kephez
Yazy Tepe
Achi Baba
Krithia
Zighin Dere
Krithia Dere
Kanli Dere
Tekke Burnu
Eski Hissarlik Pt.
Morto Bay
Sedd el Bahr
Helles
Kilitos Burnu
AEGEAN SEA
DARDANELLES
The Battle Area
GALLIPOLI PENINSULA
English Miles
0 1 2 4 6 8
Farthest advance on all Fronts
Contours at intervals of 100 metres
Emery Walker Ltd. sc

But the British casualties had been serious, over 300 in all; and those of the Sikhs, nearly 140 killed and wounded, testify to the prominent part which India's contingent had played in this engagement. In the third and final defeat of the Senussi the Sikhs had no share—they had been ordered back to India and their absence was severely felt—but India had still her representative in the 'Western Frontier Force', as two sections of the Hong Kong and Singapore Mountain Battery [1] were present in the closing stages of the operations.

[1] See below, p. 451.

# CHAPTER VII

## THE NEAR EAST: SINAI AND PALESTINE

WITH the spring of 1916 came a new phase in the operations in the Near East. We had been for more than a year on the defensive in Egypt. The time was now at hand for a more active role. It has been seen that early in 1916 General Sir Archibald Murray took over the command of the forces in Egypt and that he set himself energetically to organize an offensive. The capture of Erzerum by the Russians in February, the heavy Turkish losses in Gallipoli, and the calls of Mesopotamia had considerably relieved the pressure on Egypt. The time had now come when the enemy might be attacked by a movement from Qantara towards El 'Arish, and the well-watered zone radiating 15 miles east and south-east of Qatiya might be permanently occupied. At the beginning of August the enemy, as has already been told, attempted to forestall our forward movement by attacking our positions near Rumani, but he was driven off with a loss of 9,000 men including 4,000 prisoners;[1] and in the autumn of 1916 preparations were made to advance from Qatiya upon El 'Arish. The enemy however, retired, and on the 21st of December 1916 we occupied El 'Arish. From there the Australian Light Horse and Camelry pushed rapidly on, and before the enemy could reinforce it seized Rafah, an important point which, when the railway was laid up to it, we were able to convert into an advanced base from which an attack on the Turkish position in Palestine could be launched.

Here, however, the main resistance of the Turks was met. Some 20 miles beyond Rafah is Gaza, and Gaza, standing as it does at the gateway into Palestine, had been converted into a fortress of the first class, surrounded by earthworks among the sand-dunes lying between the town and the coast and by works on the heights behind it. All these defences were heavily wired in, and defences had been constructed along all the

[1] None of the Indian units then in Egypt took part in the Rumani operations, as they were nearly all in the Southern section of the Canal defences nearer Suez.

line extending as far as Beersheba about 30 miles from the sea. In addition Gaza and Beersheba had been connected up by an excellent motor road, while in front of the hills on which the defences were constructed ran a ravine, adding greatly to the strength of the whole position.

For the attack of so strong a position ample preparation was needed. But sufficient time for preparation was not available because the attack had to be hastened in order to support Maude's operations in Mesopotamia. Gaza was assaulted and its outskirts momentarily penetrated. But the Turks by a counter-thrust at our line of communications forced our troops to retire to their former line. A second attempt on Gaza in the following month met with no better success, despite even harder fighting and heavier losses.

General Allenby succeeded to the command in Egypt in June 1917, and at once began to prepare for a renewal of the attack on the Turks. His preparations were long and careful, and he was, moreover, fortunate in being able to obtain the reinforcements which had been denied to his predecessor. These mainly came from Salonika, from which two divisions and a Yeomanry brigade were withdrawn, but India also contributed a share. In September 1916 the 101st Grenadiers after long service in East Africa had been transferred to Egypt, and a second battalion had been formed out of the large reinforcements which had been dispatched to it from India. The same course was taken in the case of the 23rd Pioneers and the 2/3rd Gurkhas, and with the arrival of the 123rd Outram's Rifles from India in January 1917 the nucleus was provided for another division, though at first the extra Indian units were formed into a 49th Brigade and employed either at Suez or on the lines of communication in Sinai. But in the course of the summer there arrived in Egypt from India several Territorial battalions of the 2nd Wessex Division who had been sent to India at the end of 1914, and out of these and the 29th Indian Brigade a new division was formed. This division, numbered the 75th, came into existence officially in June 1917 and took over part of the front line opposite Gaza in July. It continued in this quarter until General Allenby's great offensive began, and it was just before the capture of Gaza that Indian units came into action for the first time in the Palestine campaign. This was on November 1st, when the

3/3rd Gurkhas made a most successful raid on the Gaza defences, killing or taking over 30 Turks with trifling casualties. The episode is of the more importance because this was the first serious engagement of any of the newly formed Indian battalions which were to figure so prominently in the later stages of the Palestine operations, the 'Service battalions of the Indian Army' they may almost be called. In the official report of the raid, attention was drawn to the promise displayed by this young battalion, a promise to be well maintained in later actions, and it is worth noting that the raid commander, Major Bagot Chester, was the officer who had so distinguished himself at Mauquissart in September 1915 in the last action fought by the parent battalion, the 2/3rd Gurkhas, in France.[1]

General Allenby decided to strike his chief blow against Hareira and Sheri'a—and as a preliminary to capture Beersheba. Success here offered prospects of pursuing his advantage and forcing the enemy to abandon the rest of his fortified positions. But in order to keep the enemy in the dark as to his real intentions Allenby organized an attack on Gaza also.

The chief difficulties he had in carrying out his contemplated move against Beersheba were in regard to water and transport. Arrangements had to be made to ensure that the troops would be kept supplied with water while operating at considerable distances from their original water base for a period which might amount to a week or more. There were no good roads south of the line Gaza–Beersheba, so no reliance could be placed on the use of motor transport; and practically the whole of the transport available for the force, including 30,000 camels, had to be allotted to the one portion of the force destined to strike at Beersheba in order to enable it to be kept supplied with food, water, and ammunition at a distance of 15 to 21 miles in advance of rail-head.

The date for attack on Beersheba was fixed for the 31st of October 1917. But on the 27th we commenced a bombardment of the Gaza defences, and on the 30th British and French warships joined in this bombardment. On the evening of the 30th the portion of the eastern force which was to make the attack on Beersheba was concentrated in positions of readiness for the night march to its positions of deployment. The night march was successfully carried out. The mounted troops

[1] See above, p. 230.

arrived early in the morning at a point 5 miles east of Beersheba. A force was sent from there to cut the communications to the north, while the artillery broke down the wire entanglement of the town's defences. An assault was made at 12.15 p.m. on the works to the south-east of the town. It was successful all along the line, and by 6 p.m. all the works were in our hands. The works to the north were similarly attacked and occupied by 7.30 p.m. Meanwhile the Australian Light Horse rode straight at the town from the east, galloping over two deep trenches and entering the town at 7 p.m. The Turks had been taken completely by surprise, and a very strong and extremely important position had been captured with slight loss. The left flank of the main Turkish position lay open for a decisive blow.

But the enemy's attention had still to be directed to Gaza. An attack on Gaza was therefore planned to take place before the advance from Beersheba should be made, so as to draw the enemy's reserves in the Gaza direction. The attack on the outer defences of Gaza began on the 2nd of November. It was successful in capturing most of its objectives, and it not only prevented any units being drawn from the Gaza defences to meet the threat to the Turkish left flank, but drew to Gaza some of the enemy's reserves. On the 6th of November Allenby delivered his main blow. The enemy tried to draw him off north of Beersheba, but he steadfastly kept to his settled intention of attacking Sheri'a. The attack proved completely successful. The enemy was driven from a series of very strong works. Before dark Sheri'a station was captured, and mounted troops were sent in pursuit of the enemy to the north.

All this time the bombardment of Gaza had continued, and another attack was planned for the night of the 6th/7th. But the Turks had already begun to evacuate the town, and during the 7th it came completely into our hands.

The capture of Gaza was important enough, but it was only the beginning of Allenby's attack upon the Turkish forces. He gave the enemy no rest, but pursued them steadily northward. Difficulties in regard to water and forage necessarily hindered his progress, and the enemy's resistance stiffened as he advanced. But he made persistently for Junction Station, where the railway to Jerusalem branches off into the

Judaean Hills, aiming by its capture to cut the Turkish forces in half. It was in this pursuit that the Indian units in the 75th Division got their chance of distinction. Two of its brigades had taken part in clearing Gaza, on November 9th it started on in advance up the coastal plain, and on November 11th it was in touch with the enemy near Beit Duras, which lies south-east of Esdud, the Ashdod of the Philistines. The Turks were showing signs of an attempt to rally, evidently hoping to cover the lateral line of communications along the railway from Lydda to Jerusalem. It was all important to strike them hard and promptly before they could form a strong defensive front, and so, despite transport difficulties which made rations scarce and conditions most uncomfortable, the 52nd (Lowland) Division, who were leading Allenby's infantry, attacked on November 12th and took the village of Burqa. The capture of Burqa forced the Turks back on their last line of defence, which ran from north-west to south-east in front of Junction Station. But the key to Burqa was a hill a mile to the east, called Brown Hill, and the Scottish battalion which assailed this point had the stiffest of fights to secure it. They had been driven off by a counter-attack and were preparing for yet another assault when the 2/3rd Gurkhas came up on their right, for the 75th Division was moving up on the right rear of the 52nd preparatory to the attack on the main position next day. In response to a request for help from the colonel of the 4th Royal Scots two companies of Gurkhas at once pushed forward and joined in with the remnant of the Scots. The assault was a complete success: Scots and Gurkhas went forward all together, swept the enemy off the crest, killed and took many, and secured the all-important position.

The success achieved on November 12th allowed of an attack next day on the main position in front of Junction Station; it was strong, but the pace of Allenby's pursuit had not given the Turks time to develop it fully. In this attack the 75th Division was on the right of the 52nd, beyond whose left flank were Yeomanry. The Turks put up a stout fight, but the attack of the 75th Division was vigorously pressed, the two Gurkha battalions being well to the fore. Tel el Turmus, El Qastine, and Yazur were promptly taken, and then, pushing on, the division secured a second ridge between El Mesmiyeh and

Qatra, beat off a counter-attack, and took many prisoners. Elsewhere, too, the attack had gone well. The 52nd (Lowland) Division took the strongly held villages of Qatra and El Mughaiyir, being materially assisted by a most dashing mounted charge of Yeomanry across the plain under heavy fire, and by the evening the enemy were in retreat. On the 14th we occupied the station and the enemy's army was thus broken into two separate parts, which retired north and east respectively in small scattered groups. A strategic move of the first importance had been successfully accomplished.

In fifteen days Allenby had advanced his forces 60 miles on his right and about 40 on his left. He had driven a Turkish Army of 9 infantry divisions and 1 cavalry division out of a position in which it had been entrenched for six months, and, pursuing it, had inflicted on it losses amounting in all to a total of nearly two-thirds of its original effectives. Over 9,000 prisoners, about 80 guns, over 100 machine guns, and quantities of ammunition and stores had been captured.[1]

Having split the enemy in two, Allenby gave him little rest; he first pressed on up the coastal plain by Ramle and Lydda, and on the 16th of November occupied Jaffa. Meanwhile the Yeomanry were feeling their way into the Judaean foot-hills and penetrated as far as Beit 'Ūr et Tahta (Lower Bethhoron). On the line of advance to Jerusalem there was only one good road, and the country to be traversed consisted of a series of spurs, steep, bare, and stony, and in many places precipitous. Beside the main road the other roads were mere tracks, which without improvement were impracticable for wheeled traffic, and throughout these hills the water supply was scanty. Still it was all-important to strike while the iron was hot and to follow up the enemy before he could recover from his demoralization or bring down reserves from the north. Only a very few days could therefore be spent in preparation.

Protected on its flanks by mounted troops, the infantry commenced its advance on the 18th of November, the 75th Division on the right, the 52nd on the left, and on the 19th entered Latron. From thence, in order to avoid any fighting in close vicinity to the Holy City, a move northwards was made with the object of cutting the road from Jerusalem to Nablus. But the Turks were strongly entrenched on the

[1] For these pages see General Allenby's dispatch of 16 December, 1917.

ridges west of this road and were supported by artillery. The first attempt to reach the road was not successful. The enemy, gathering reinforcements, counter-attacked in force, and the Yeomanry who were on the left flank of the 52nd Division had to fall back. The 75th Division, advancing along the main road from Jaffa to Jerusalem, were soon fiercely engaged. But of its four Indian battalions two were Gurkhas, and one, the 58th Vaughan's Rifles, was one of the units of the famous Frontier Force, so hill warfare such as this advance gave them was very much in their line. The 2/3rd Gurkhas on the left and 58th Rifles on the right picketed the hills which flanked the road and protected the main advance. After two days' fighting Qaryet el 'Inab, the Biblical Kirjath Jearim, was reached. Beyond it, however, the Turks had strong fortifications astride the road, and the bulk of the division moved to the left, north-eastward, to co-operate with the 52nd in attacking the key-position of Nabi Samweil, a hill only 200 feet lower than Ben Lomond. This led to some desperate fighting; on November 21st a lodgement was gained on Nabi Samweil, the 123rd Outram's Rifles and 3/3rd Gurkhas being among the assaulting battalions, but the Turks counter-attacked and held up all further advance. On November 23rd a fresh effort was made to push on and take El Jib, a flat-topped hill to the north of Nabi Samweil and about the height of the highest Cheviots. In this the 2/3rd Gurkhas were engaged, but the attack though gallantly pressed failed to take El Jib, though the hold which the 75th Division had acquired on Nabi Samweil was not relaxed and proved invaluable when early in December the second and finally successful advance on Jerusalem was made. The work of the 75th Division was fittingly recognized by a key being approved by General Allenby as its divisional badge in recognition of its contribution to the capture of Jerusalem, its taking and holding of the key-position of Nabi Samweil. Thus the little Indian contingent had taken their full share in a famous and dramatic success, and the good fighting of the four battalions had found a parallel in the fine work of the Indian gunners of the Hong Kong and Singapore Battery, whose small mountain guns were among the very few pieces of artillery which had been able to get up to the front along with the infantry. Indeed, it was through our lack of artillery to support the infantry that the attack was brought to a standstill.

A halt had now to be called till adequate preparations for a final attack could be made. The railway had to be pushed on, existing roads and tracks were improved, and new roads constructed to enable heavy and field artillery to be placed in position and ammunition and supplies brought up. The water supply was also developed. Meanwhile our troops were advancing steadily along the road from Beersheba to Jerusalem, and by the evening of the 6th of December were 10 miles north of Hebron. The time had now come for that dramatic movement on Jerusalem itself—a movement important enough for purely military purposes, but so much more important because of the effect upon men's minds throughout all the civilized world.

By the 7th of December we were ready. But now our fortune failed us; the fine weather which had so far favoured our movements broke, 'and for three days rain was almost continuous. The hills were covered with mist at frequent intervals, rendering observation from the air and visual signalling impossible.' Worse still, the roads were made 'quite impassable for mechanical transport and camels in many places.' Nevertheless, the troops moved into positions of assembly on the night of the 7th and, assaulting at dawn on the 8th, soon carried their first objectives. They then pressed steadily forward. Considerable opposition was encountered, and progress was slow through having to climb steep and rocky hill-sides and cross deep valleys. Also the difficulty of moving guns forward made it almost impossible to give the infantry artillery support. But by about noon London troops had already advanced over 2 miles and the Yeomanry had secured an important spur. We then captured all the enemy's prepared defences west and north-west of Jerusalem and were only 1½ miles from the town itself. No further advance that day could, however, be made because the right column had been delayed some distance south of Jerusalem.

Next morning—the 9th of December—the advance was resumed. It was then found that the Turks had withdrawn during the night, and our troops driving back rear-guards were able to occupy the road to Nablus 4 miles north of Jerusalem and a position on the road to Jericho east of the town. These operations isolated the town. At noon it surrendered, and on the 11th Allenby made his official entry. An important

strategic position had been taken. But, better still, all Christendom was heartened by the capture of a city with such sacred associations.

Our troops occupied Jerusalem, but the enemy was still only 4 miles off. Before any further advance could be made the roads had to be improved, and supplies and ammunition brought up. While these preparations were being made the enemy attacked with great determination along the Nablus–Jerusalem road with the object of regaining that city. This attack was launched at 11.30 p.m. on the 26th of December. Our outposts were driven in at some points, but, though the enemy made repeated assaults, he only succeeded at one point in reaching our main position and was then immediately driven out by the local reserves. In all these attacks he lost heavily. Attacks made east of Jerusalem were no more successful. Nor did we merely stand on the defensive. We counter-attacked the enemy, and this counter-attack with two divisions resulted in an advance of 4,000 yards on a 6-mile front. The enemy's initiative was taken from him, and he was forced to abandon his attempt to recapture Jerusalem.[1]

On the 28th of December Allenby ordered a general advance northward, and by the evening of the 30th his troops had advanced on a front of 12 miles to a depth varying from 6 miles on the right to 3 miles on the left. As a result of this advance his force 'was in a far better position to cover Jerusalem and the towns of Ramle and Jaffa and the road which, running from Jaffa to Jerusalem, formed the chief artery of lateral communication' behind his line. The Turkish attempt to recapture Jerusalem had thus ended in crushing defeat.

No further advance north was possible for the time being. Until the railway had reached a point considerably nearer the front it was impossible to proceed with the necessary accumulation of stores, supplies, and ammunition. Moreover, before a further advance in a northerly direction could be made it was necessary to drive the enemy across the Jordan, so as to render the British right flank secure. An advance to the Jordan was therefore the next step contemplated by

[1] The 75th Division had no hand in this fighting, having taken over part of the line nearer the coast and north-east of Jaffa, where it remained for some months, having several minor encounters with the Turks but making no big attack. For these pages see General Allenby's dispatch of 18 September 1918.

General Allenby. By being denied the crossings of the Jordan the enemy would be prevented from raiding the tract of country to the west of the Dead Sea; the control of the Dead Sea would pass to us; and, lastly, a point of departure would be obtained for harrying the enemy's line of communications with the Hejaz.

'The chief obstacle to the advance lay in the difficulties of the ground rather than in any opposition the enemy might offer. The descent from... Jerusalem to the valley of the Jordan is very steep.' The banks of the wadis are often precipitous, rendering any crossing from one bank to the other impossible. Moreover, a series of ridges afforded the enemy strong defensive positions. These obstacles were not, however, considered insuperable; and the general plan adopted consisted of a direct advance by the 60th Division to the cliffs over-looking Jericho, while the Australian and New Zealand Mounted Division was to co-operate on the right flank in order to cut off the enemy's retreat.

The advance began on the 19th of February 1918. Considerable opposition was met with, but the enemy were driven from point to point, and on the 21st of February the 60th Division and an Australian mounted brigade captured Jericho. The enemy were driven across the Jordan, and Allenby's right flank was thus made safe. But he had not yet secured a base sufficiently broad to enable him to carry out operations against the Hejaz Railway. A series of operations had therefore to be undertaken to clear the Jordan valley still farther north. The fall to the Jordan is short and sharp, the whole country is very intricate, and progress through it was difficult. But by the 12th of March the Jordan valley had been sufficiently cleared to enable Allenby to carry out operations against the Turkish line of communications to the Hejaz in conjunction with the Arab forces under Emir Feisul.

These Arab forces were based on 'Aqaba. In January 1918 the Emir had captured the heights 7 miles from the important station of Ma'an on the Hejaz Railway. Other Arab forces had captured the forest north-west of Ma'an and destroyed much of the light railway which was used to transport fuel for the railway. Severe fighting between Arabs and Turks had also taken place 15 miles south-east of the Dead Sea.

To assist the Arabs in attacking Ma'an, Allenby on the

21st of March made a raid on Amman 30 miles east by north of Jericho. The railway here 'crosses a viaduct and passes through a tunnel. If these could be destroyed it would be some weeks before traffic could be resumed.' Even if this could not be done 'the mere threat of a repetition of this raid would compel the enemy to maintain a considerable force to cover Amman.' The troops available to operate against the Arabs would be thus reduced. Unfortunately heavy rain fell, seriously impeding the movement of the troops. The enemy were therefore enabled to bring up reinforcements. No permanent demolitions were possible, but much of the railway north and south of Amman was destroyed, considerable loss was inflicted on the Turks, they were forced to concentrate troops at Amman for its defence, Ma'an was made open to attack, and Emir Feisul was, in consequence, able to make successful raids upon it, doing much damage to the railway.

Simultaneously with these operations the troops in the Judaean hills pushed forward at several points, the Indian units in the 75th Division making an advance in the foot-hills near the coastal plain, and this would have been followed up by operations on a larger scale had not the opening of the great German offensive of the spring of 1918, designed to crush the British Army, made it necessary for the British High Command to withdraw all available British troops from Palestine to France and to replace them by Indian troops. From this time onwards, therefore, India played a much more prominent part than heretofore in the Palestine campaign. The 7th (Meerut) Division and the 3rd (Lahore) Division, which had performed such signal service to the Empire in France during the early critical days of the war and which had afterwards served with distinction during the advance on Baghdad, had already been withdrawn from Mesopotamia and were on their way to Palestine before the German offensive began, while the transfer of the Indian cavalry regiments from France to replace Yeomanry units had been ordered in February and was also in progress. But an even more important step was what was known as the 'Indianization' of four of the British infantry divisions in the E.E.F. One of these, the 75th, as already mentioned, contained a proportion of Indian battalions, which was now increased from a third to three-quarters, the others, the 10th (Irish), 53rd (Welsh), and the 60th (London)

were placed on a uniform establishment of three British and ten Indian battalions, the latter including one of pioneers. Of the British battalions thus relieved, the majority proceeded to France, where some, chiefly 'second-line' London Territorials or Irish Service battalions, were utilized as reinforcements for shattered units, others were incorporated in divisions which, like the 34th, 50th, and 66th, had to be re-formed from battalions hitherto serving in the eastern theatres of war. A few of those left in Palestine had to be drafted straight away to the battalions destined to be retained in the 'Indianized' divisions. In all thirty-seven Indian battalions were required to fill up the gaps in the E.E.F. Of these four were available in the country, the 1/23rd and 2/23rd Pioneers and 1/101st and 2/101st Grenadiers, twenty were dispatched from India,[1] the remainder[2] being raised in Egypt by the process described in an earlier chapter.[3] The formation of these new units took some time, and although the method which was adopted in forming them ensured the presence in their ranks of a good proportion of trained and experienced men, it was impossible to carry out any very active operations during this period of reorganization. But it was a work of the utmost importance, and the success with which the 'Indianization' was carried out is greatly to the credit of those who planned it, made it possible, and actually saw it through. It meant the reinforcement of the British Armies in France by nearly 50,000 men in infantry alone, and as in the closing stages of the Palestine campaign a third of the cavalry and nearly two-thirds of the infantry under General Allenby's command belonged to the Indian Army, the great victory which shattered the Turkish power in Palestine and Syria may fairly be reckoned among the triumphs of that army.[4] But before General Allenby

[1] Ten of these were old units, the 1/17th Infantry, 1/21st Punjabis, 29th Punjabis, 38th Dogras, 46th Punjabis, 1/54th Sikhs, 72nd and 74th Punjabis, 110th Mahrattas and 130th Baluchis; two, the 1st and 3rd Kashmir Infantry, were Imperial Service troops; the others had been raised since the outbreak of war and were the 2nd Guides, the 2/19th Punjabis, 2/30th Punjabis, 2/32nd Pioneers, 2/42nd Deolis, 1/50th Kumaon Rifles, 2/97th Deccan Infantry, 2/127th Baluchis.

[2] The 4/11th Gurkhas, 2/151st Infantry and 3/151st Infantry, 1/152nd, 2/152nd and 3/152nd Infantry, 1/153rd, 2/153rd and 3/153rd Infantry, 2/154th and 3/154th Infantry, and 1/155th and 2/155th Pioneers.

[3] See Chap. III, pp. 188–9.

[4] The reorganization of the cavalry proceeded on somewhat similar lines. The 1st and 2nd Mounted Divisions were reconstituted on a basis of one Yeomanry and two Indian units in each brigade, and their connexion with the Indian Cavalry

could launch his final blow at the Turks there was of necessity a long pause, and a stalemate seemed to have come into being on the Palestine front. All these changes necessitated much reorganization of the forces during the summer months, and the new Indian troops required a great deal of training, a special difficulty being the lack of British officers who spoke the languages of these Indians and knew their customs. Allenby would have preferred putting off his great final offensive against the Turks till the new Indian battalions had accustomed themselves to local conditions, but the rains usually begin at the end of October, rendering the plains of Sharon and Esdraelon impassable for transport, except along the few existing roads. Consequently, he could not postpone operations beyond the middle of September. In the meantime a constant series of small raids and outpost actions fulfilled the double purpose of giving to the newcomers a first taste of fighting and of worrying and wearing down the Turks.[1]

At the beginning of September the enemy's fighting strength was estimated at 4,000 sabres, 32,000 rifles, and 400 guns; and Allenby had at his disposal 12,000 sabres, 57,000 rifles, and 540 guns. He had therefore a considerable superiority, especially in mounted troops. On the other hand the Turks occupied a country difficult of access and easy to defend. Allenby's activities in the spring had led the enemy to believe that he would strike his blow east of the Jordan or north of Jerusalem. But he had the opposite intention, and meant to strike well to the west of the Jordan along the coastal plain. Further, as the enemy had almost the whole of his force in the front line and very little in reserve, Allenby intended, by breaking through the front line, to make full use of his superiority in mounted troops and cut the Turkish line of communication with Damascus by occupying the plain of Esdraelon and the valley of Jezreel.

Divisions which had served in France was recognized by their being renumbered as the 4th and 5th Cavalry Divisions. To complete the 5th Cavalry Division to three brigades, for it had left its Canadian brigade in France, a new Imperial Service Cavalry brigade was organized out of the Hyderabad and Mysore Lancers which had served so long in Egypt, and the Jodhpur Lancers which had accompanied the Regular Indian cavalry from France. This brigade, numbered the 15th, distinguished itself greatly in a minor action in the Jordan valley in July, the Jodhpur Lancers making a brilliant and successful charge.

[1] For these pages see General Allenby's dispatch of 31 October, 1918.

By reducing the strength of the troops in the Jordan valley to a minimum and by withdrawing his reserves from the hills north of Jerusalem, Allenby was able, without attracting the attention of the enemy, to concentrate five divisions with a total of 383 guns for the attack of the very strong defences of the Turks in the coastal plain. In addition two cavalry divisions and one Australian mounted division were available for this front. Thus on the front of attack he concentrated 35,000 rifles against 8,000, and 383 guns against 130. It was this masterly movement before attack that assured success in the subsequent operations. Lieutenant-General Sir Edward Bulfin was put in command of the attack, and he was ordered to break through the enemy's defences between the railway and the sea. The 3rd (Lahore) Division and the 7th (Meerut) Division formed part of the force under his command.

The secret concentration in the coastal plain had been completed by the morning of the 18th of September, and the enemy, by feint attacks east of the Jordan and by Arab movements, had been led to believe that it was Allenby's intention to attack Amman and the Hejaz Railway. On the morning of the 19th the real attack was made. At 4.30 a.m. the artillery opened an intense bombardment, under cover of which the infantry moved forward from their positions. 'The enemy replied energetically to our bombardment, but in most cases his barrage fell behind the attacking infantry.' The attack of the infantry was delivered with the greatest dash, and went extraordinarily well. On the left of the line next the sea was the 60th Division (Major-General Sir J .S. M. Shea), in which were included the 2nd Guides, 2/19th Punjabis, 2/30th Punjabis, 1/50th Kumaon Rifles, 2/97th Deccan Infantry, 2/127th Baluchis, 1/30th Baluchis, and 3/151st Infantry. Its task was to break through a trench system north-east of Arsuf, consisting of three lines of prepared positions, and then, pushing up the coast, to secure the passages over the Nahr el Falik, a deep cut by which the inland marshes drain into the sea. It had some hard fighting in which the Guides did well and the Kumaons fairly won their spurs, and it carried out its programme to the letter, opening the way for the cavalry to stream through. Next the 60th came the Meerut Division, now commanded by Major-General Sir V. B. Fane. Included in it were the British battalions which had earned so much credit for it in France and Mesopo-

tamia, the 2nd Leicesters, 2nd Black Watch, and 1st Seaforths, but of its Indian units only the 125th Rifles had been in France. The 51st and 53rd Sikhs and 56th Rifles had joined it in Egypt on its way to Mesopotamia, and had added to its laurels in that country. The 20th, 28th, and 92nd Punjabis, 1st Guides, 1/8th Gurkhas, and 121st Pioneers completed the Division. In its last big fight the Meerut Division did not fall short of its past achievements. Its first objective was quickly won, and then, wheeling to the right, it attacked and took the western portion of the formidable Et Tireh defences and thereby opened the way for the 4th Cavalry Division, which was following hard on its heels, to pass through. On the right of the Meerut Division was Major-General Palin's 75th Division, now including the 29th Punjabis, 58th Rifles, 72nd Punjabis, 123rd Rifles, 1/152nd and 2/154th Infantry, 2/3rd and 3/3rd Gurkhas, 2/32nd Pioneers and 3rd Kashmir I. S. Infantry. Its task was the capture of the Et Tireh defences, Miskeh and Et Tireh itself, which last the 72nd Punjabis, 2/3rd Gurkhas, and 3rd Kashmirs reached about 8 a.m., but only finally secured after three hours' sharp fighting. Beyond them the Lahore Division under Major-General A. R. Hoskins was confronted by two strongly defended hills known as Brown Hill and Fir Hill, behind which lay a village called Sabieh which had been elaborately fortified. These positions, however, it mastered comparatively easily, and then, with the 7th Brigade (1st Connaught Rangers, 27th and 91st Punjabis, and 2/7th Gurkhas) on the right and 9th Brigade (2nd Dorsets,[1] 93rd Burma Infantry, 105th Mahratta L. I., and 1/1st Gurkhas) on the left, it swung eastward and attacked the positions about the railway between Jaljulye and Qalqilye. These were formidable, but the 8th Brigade (1st Manchesters, 47th Sikhs, 59th Rifles[2] and 2/124th Baluchistan Infantry) were put in to support the attack; by its help the defences were carried and by noon the Division had penetrated to a depth of two miles into the Turkish position.

[1] This unit, originally in the 6th Indian Division which distinguished itself so greatly in the early stages of the Mesopotamian operations, had been re-formed after the fall of Kut and had replaced the 1st H.L.I. in this brigade in the course of 1917.

[2] These three units had served with the Lahore Division continuously since August 1914 in three theatres of war, as had the Connaught Rangers, the 1/1st Gurkhas and the Divisional pioneer battalion, the 34th Sikh Pioneers.

Beyond the Lahore Division came the 54th, the only one in which no Indian units were included. It also was speedily and completely successful. The success of the first attack was promptly followed up, not only by the cavalry who poured through the gaps that had been made for them and were soon profiting to the full by their opportunities, but by the infantry themselves. The 75th Division was halted at Et Tireh in reserve, but the other four pressed on eastward and northward, giving the Turks no rest and no time to rally or re-form. As our men pressed on to the junction of Tul Karm, 'bodies of troops, guns, motor lorries, and transport of every description were endeavouring to escape along the road leading to Messudie and Nablus. This road, which follows the railway up a narrow valley, was already crowded with troops and transport,' and the havoc was increased by attacks from our aeroplanes and by the Australian mounted troops making a detour and seizing a position which commanded the road. By evening the infantry had reached a line from Rafat by 'Azzun to Tul Karm Station, and many units had covered over 20 miles. If the victory of September 19th will always be remembered for the brilliant way in which Allenby's cavalry improved and exploited it, the splendid work of the infantry, their dash in attack, the rapidity and force of their advance, must not be overlooked.

As soon as the success of the attack was assured, Allenby ordered an advance on Nablus to be made that night by the two divisions of the XXth Corps. These, the 10th and the 53rd, were holding the front from Rafat eastward, and had not taken part in the original attack, though a minor operation by the latter division on the night of September 18th a few miles east of the Nablus road helped to distract the attention of the Turks from the real point of attack. The enemy had long expected an attack from the direction of Jerusalem on Nablus, and had constructed defences of great strength on successive ridges. Nor were the Turkish troops in this portion of the field disorganized, and they were able to oppose a sturdy resistance to the advance. Moreover, 'the country is broken and rugged, demanding great physical exertion on the part of the troops and preventing the artillery keeping pace with the infantry.' Nevertheless, when on the night of the 19th the 10th attacked west of the Nablus road and the 53rd east

of it, they made good progress.[1] Both divisions were stoutly opposed, the 10th finding four German battalions in the sector which it attacked; but both fought well, the 2/42nd Deolis making no less than nine successive efforts against one particular ridge, and their vigorous pressure upon the as yet unbroken Turkish centre was no small factor in the general success. It was the determination with which on September 21st they pressed forward rapidly over exceedingly difficult country that brought them to Nablus that evening and cut off the only remaining line of retreat open to the main Turkish Army, down the Wadi Farah to the fords of the Jordan at Jisr ed Damye. Further east, again, in the operations beyond the Jordan which completed the Turkish rout by destroying their 4th Army, India was represented by the 20th (Imperial Service) Infantry Brigade, in which were serving the Alwar, Patiala, and Gwalior Infantry and the 110th Mahrattas. If the hard fighting which fell to the infantry west of Jordan did not come their way, they too did well, marched hard and far, and carried out an important and arduous task effectively.

All this time the cavalry were making the great advance which was to sever the enemy's communications. Even before the infantry had attacked in the early morning of the 19th September, the two cavalry divisions and the Australian Mounted Division had formed up in rear of the infantry ready to take advantage of any break in the enemy's line. Immediately that break was made they advanced, and by noon the leading troops of the Desert Mounted Corps were 18 miles north of the original front line. After a brief rest they pushed on, and the 5th Cavalry Division[2] riding through the hills of Samaria pressed forward into the Plain of Esdraelon, the

[1] The 10th (Major-General J. R. Longley) had three Irish Regular battalions which were serving in India in August 1914 and had come home to form the 27th Division, from which they had later on been transferred to the 10th; with them were the 38th Dogras, 2/42nd Deolis, 46th and 74th Punjabis, 1/54th Sikhs, 1/101st and 2/101st Grenadiers, 2/151st Infantry, and 1st Kashmir I.S. Infantry. The Indian infantry in Major-General S. F. Mott's 53rd Division were nearly all improvised new units, the 1/17th Infantry and the 1/21st Punjabis being the only old battalions; the others were the 3/152nd, 1/153rd, 2/153rd, and 3/153rd and 3/154th Infantry and the 4/11th Gurkhas.

[2] This was commanded by Major-General H. J. M. Macandrew and included two Yeomanry regiments, with the 9th Hodson's Horse, the 18th Lancers, the 20th Deccan Horse, the 34th Poona Horse, and the three Imperial Service cavalry regiments.

13th Cavalry Brigade[1] being directed on Nazareth, which it reached at 5.30 a.m. on the 20th, nearly capturing the German general Liman von Sanders and actually capturing his papers and some of his staff. Within thirty-six hours of the commencement of the battle all the main outlets of escape remaining to the Turks on the west of the Jordan had been seized. They could only avoid capture by using the tracks to the crossings of the Jordan and these were being rapidly closed. Allenby's surprise attack with overwhelming force at the selected point, and his immediate and daring use of his cavalry, had been successful to the fullest expectations, and the Turkish Army was now in his hands.

The enemy's resistance had been broken on the 20th of September, and on the 21st all organized resistance ceased. On that day we captured Nablus. In the Turkish rear the greatest confusion prevailed. Camps and hospitals were being hastily evacuated, and roads leading north and east were congested with traffic. The disorganization of the enemy was increased by attacks by our airmen. On the 22nd we had seized the bridges over the Jordan, thus destroying all chance of escape in that direction. Great quantities of transport and numerous guns were abandoned by the Turks, and many bodies of Turks began surrendering to the cavalry who charged into the columns. The Turkish forces had ceased to exist as an army, and but few escaped.

Meanwhile the cavalry had been advancing on Haifa and Acre on the coast, and Indian cavalry had an opportunity of displaying their qualities. The 5th Cavalry Division was shelled from the slopes of Mount Carmel 2 miles east of Haifa on the 23rd, and found the road and river-crossings defended by numerous machine guns. 'Whilst the Mysore Lancers were clearing the rocky slopes of Mount Carmel, the Jodhpur Lancers charged through the defile, and riding over the enemy's machine guns galloped into the town, where a number of Turks were speared in the streets. Colonel Thakur Dalpat Singh, M.C., fell gallantly leading the charge.' At Acre little opposition was met with, and the small garrison was overtaken and captured while attempting to escape to the north.[2]

[1] Gloucestershire Hussars, Hodson's Horse, and the 18th Lancers.

[2] The Meerut Division, following hard behind the cavalry, occupied Haifa on September 29th and then pushed on northwards past Tyre and Sidon to Beirut.

Thus all the country to the west of the Jordan had now been cleared, and the position of the Turks on the east had become untenable. By the 23rd the Turks were in full retreat, pursued by the Australian and New Zealand Mounted Division and bombed by airmen. On the 25th Amman was attacked and captured, the enemy retreating northwards along the Hejaz Railway and the Pilgrims' Route harassed by our airmen and the Arabs, and pursued by the Australians and New Zealanders. Further south Ma'an had been evacuated by the Turks on the 23rd September and had been occupied by the Arab Army under Emir Feisul.

The Turkish Army Corps retreating from the Hejaz was thus cut off, and on the 29th of September the Turkish commander, seeing that escape was impossible, surrendered with 5,000 men.

The way was now clear for an advance on Damascus; and the Desert Mounted Corps was ordered to make their advance in two columns, one proceeding by the north end and the other by the south end of the Sea of Galilee. On the 25th Tiberias was captured. Considerable difficulty was experienced in crossing the Jordan on the 27th, but the Australian Mounted Division overcame the opposition and pressing on drove back the enemy's rear-guards, and by the 30th were 12 miles south-west of Damascus. On the same date the 4th Cavalry Division and the Arab Army were approaching Damascus from the south.

During the evening of the 30th of September the Australians, after breaking down the enemy's opposition, closed the exits from Damascus to the north and west, while the 5th Cavalry Division reached the southern outskirts of the town, and at 6 a.m. on the 1st of October the Desert Mounted Corps and the Arab Army entered Damascus amidst scenes of great enthusiasm.

'After the German and Turkish troops in the town had been collected and guards had been posted, our troops were withdrawn. In the meantime the 3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade had proceeded northward in pursuit of bodies of the enemy which had succeeded in leaving the town on the previous day.'

The Desert Mounted Corps had had a severe strain put upon it in the advance to Damascus, but Allenby was so anxious to exploit the success which had been achieved in

the break-up of the Turkish Armies in Palestine and Syria that he ordered the corps to move on Beirut on the 5th of October. The occupation of this town would give him a port with a road and railway running inland to Damascus, and an alternative and shorter line of supply would thus be secured. The corps encountered no opposition, and occupied the important junction of Rayak on the 6th of October.

To support this movement the 7th (Meerut) Division had left Haifa on the 3rd of October and marched along the coast to Beirut. Crossing the Ladder of Tyre it was received by the populace of Tyre and Sidon with enthusiasm. On the 8th of October the Division reached Beirut where it was warmly welcomed, the inhabitants handing over 660 Turks who had surrendered to them. Ships of the French Navy had already entered the harbour.

Allenby was not even yet content. He continued to press his advantage to the very utmost. On the 9th of October he ordered the Desert Mounted Corps again to advance and occupy Homs, and he ordered the XXIst Corps to continue its march along the coast to Tripoli. On the 15th of October Homs was occupied, and on the 13th of October the XXIst Corps Cavalry Regiment and armoured cars occupied Tripoli without opposition. Having thus seized Homs and Tripoli, Allenby determined to deliver his final blow and capture Aleppo. His mounted troops were already severely strained and many were suffering from sickness. But time was of importance, and he judged that the 5th Cavalry Division[1] would be sufficient for the purpose. There were indeed some 20,000 Turks and Germans in Aleppo, but of these only about 8,000 were combatants and they were demoralized. Moreover, numbers were leaving the town daily for the north.

So the cavalry and armoured cars pressed on. Five miles south of Aleppo the armoured cars were checked by strong Turkish rear-guards on the 24th October and had to remain in observation till the 15th (Imperial Service) Cavalry Brigade caught them up. On the 25th the brigade arrived and the cars and cavalry pressed on. The same evening a detachment of the Arab Army reached the outskirts of Aleppo, and during

[1] For the composition of the 5th Cavalry Division see above, p. 277, note 2. The Imperial Service cavalry regiments were much to the fore in the last stages of the campaign.

the night forced their way into the town, inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy.[1] Early in the morning of the 26th the cars and Imperial Service Cavalry, moving round the west of the town, followed the enemy along the Aleppo–Katma road and gained touch with them south-east of Haritan. Here a Turkish rear-guard of 2,500 infantry, 150 cavalry, and 8 guns were charged by the Mysore Lancers and two squadrons of the Jodhpur Lancers covered by the armoured cars and two dismounted squadrons of the Jodhpur Lancers. They forced the enemy to fall back, but were not strong enough to complete their victory.

Not only was Aleppo captured but the junction of Muslimie was also occupied and an advance to Alexandretta was planned. But before the final stroke could be delivered the Armistice with Turkey was concluded. It came into force on the 31st of October, and thus brought Allenby's brilliant campaign to a close.

The results of that campaign were summarized in his dispatch. Aleppo is over 300 miles from the original front line. The 5th Cavalry Division had covered 500 miles between the 19th September and 26th October and had captured over 11,000 prisoners and 52 guns. Altogether in that period 75,000 prisoners were captured, including 3,700 Germans and Austrians. In addition 360 guns and the transport and equipment of three Turkish armies fell into our hands. The captures included over 800 machine guns, 210 motor lorries, 44 motor cars, 89 railway engines, 468 carriages and trucks, and some 3,500 animals.

This magnificent success was primarily due to Allenby's generalship, to the skill with which he had planned his attack, the secrecy with which he had made his preparations and moved his troops, and the relentlessness with which he had pursued the enemy once they were broken. It was also due to the dash of the infantry who 'in a few hours broke through the defences which the enemy had spent months in strengthening.' By thus making a break in the enemy's line the infantry enabled the cavalry to accomplish its mission. 'The subsequent advance through the hills over most difficult country, and in face of determined and organized resistance by the enemy's rear-

[1] Three days later the Meerut Division concentrated at Tripoli, having covered 270 miles since the advance began.

guards, tried the infantry severely. Nothing, however, stopped its progress, and the relentless pressure maintained on the enemy's rear-guards allowed him no time to carry out an organized retreat and drove him, in disorganized bodies, into the arms of the cavalry.

'The Desert Mounted Corps took some 46,000 prisoners during the operations. The complete destruction of the 7th and 8th Turkish Armies depended mainly on the rapidity with which their communications were reached, and on quick decision in dealing with the enemy's columns as they attempted to escape. The vigorous handling of the cavalry by its leaders and the rapidity of its movements overcame all attempts to delay its progress. The enemy's columns, after they had outdistanced the pursuing infantry, were given no time to reorganize and fight their way through.'

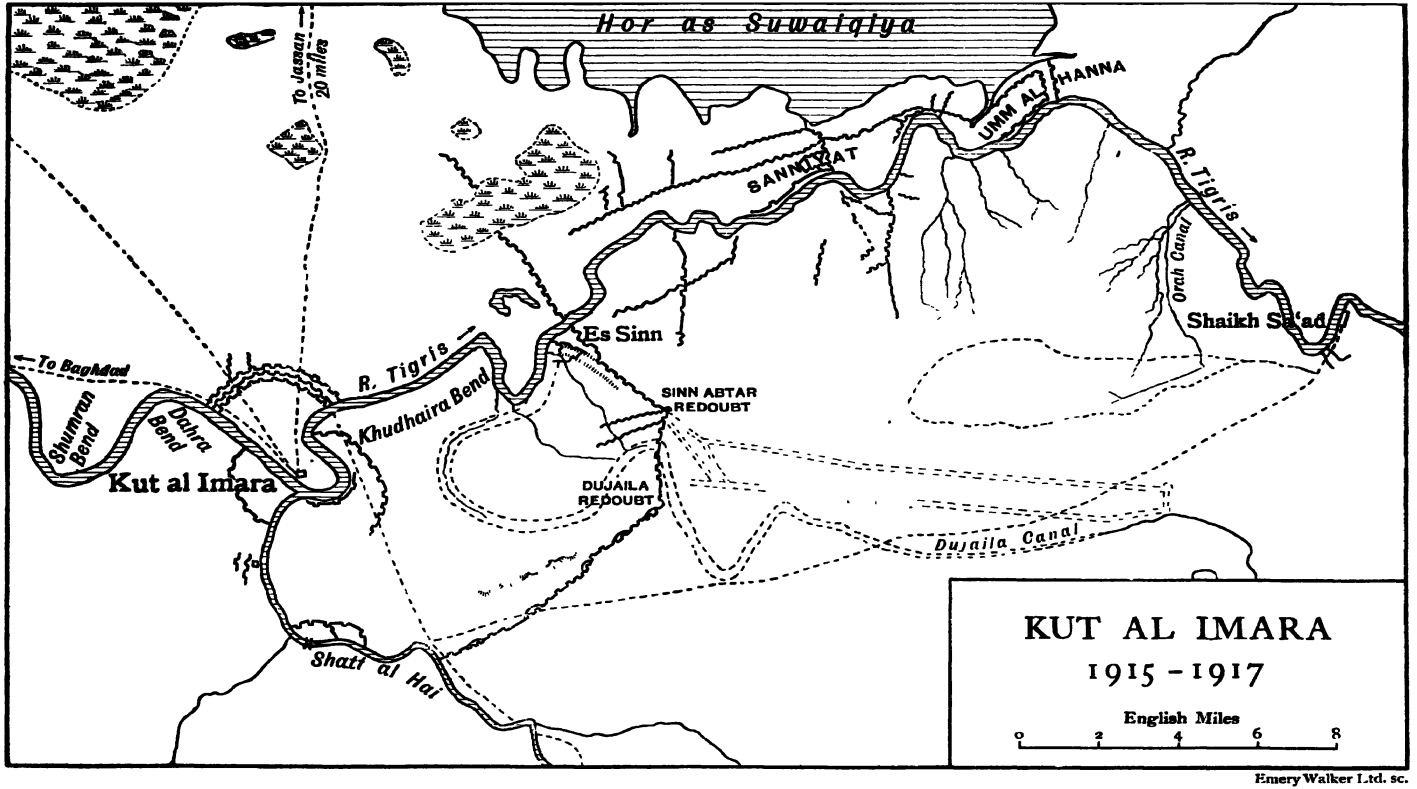
Thus just as it was by the Indian Army that the first success was scored in the defence of Egypt against the Turk, so in the final blow in the long offensive which had started from Qantara and only ended at Aleppo because the Turk had had enough, the Indian Army was to the fore. Certainly if India's direct contribution to the breaking of the Gaza and Beersheba line and to the taking of Jerusalem had been comparatively small, it is not too much to say that but for the Indian Army, for the great work by which it had been developed and expanded to nearly double its old strength, the crowning victory of September 19th could not have been achieved.

# CHAPTER VIII

## MESOPOTAMIA

Of all the theatres of the war Mesopotamia was the most closely connected with India. Of recent years the Germans had shown marked interest in this region. The Berlin–Baghdad Railway was an attractive vision filling their imagination. It led towards the Persian Gulf, the Persian Gulf led to India, and India held boundless possibilities of wealth. When the Turks joined them in the war, the Germans looked to their allies to command if possible an outlet on the Persian Gulf—and incidentally to occupy the Anglo-Persian oil-field near Ahwaz which was one of the principal sources of oil supply for the British Navy.

The British, however, were on the alert, and had anticipated enemy efforts to establish themselves on the Persian Gulf. In the very early days of the war they had drawn up plans for the occupation of Basra, not only to forestall the enemy on the Persian Gulf but also to impress the Arabs, to protect the Anglo-Persian oil installations, and to help in safeguarding Egypt. The 6th (Poona) Division, out of the troops intended for service in Europe, was reserved for an expedition to the Persian Gulf, and in the middle of October 1914—that is, well before November 1st, when Turkey declared war—the 16th Infantry Brigade of this Division embarked at Bombay to occupy Abadan, the island in the Shatt-al-'Arab on which were situated the refineries of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. This force, commanded by Brigadier-General Delamain, reached Bahrein, an island in the Persian Gulf belonging to the British, on October 23rd, and, having on November 6th bombarded and occupied the Turkish village and fort of Fao, on November 8th disembarked at Sanniya on the Turkish shore opposite Abadan. About the same day a Turkish force, after marching rapidly from Baghdad, had arrived at Basra. Turkish troops were pushed down to oppose the British at Sanniya ; they attacked on November 11th but were beaten off, and by November 13th the main body of the 6th Division under the command of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Lieutenant-General Sir A. A. Barrett had arrived. On November 17th the Turkish force was attacked and defeated at Sahil, and on November 22nd, three weeks after the Turkish declaration of war, Basra was occupied by the British, the German scheme for gaining a footing on the Persian Gulf was frustrated, and the very important oil-fields saved. Such were the results of a timely and bold offensive. Many and grievous troubles were to follow, and stupendous difficulties of supply and transport had to be overcome. But an initial advantage had been gained from which the enemy were never able to recover.

General Barrett had with him an insufficient force to conduct offensive operations against the Turks on any great scale, and Basra was inadequately equipped as a base; nevertheless he was not inactive. He struck out at Al Qurna, which lies at the junction of the Tigris and Euphrates about 50 miles higher up the river than Basra, and forced the Turks there to surrender on the 9th December. With the capture of Qurna the expedition had reached a point where it seemed that a halt might be called; the danger to the oil-fields had been averted, a definite military superiority over the Turks had been established, a lead had been given to the Arabs, and the prospect of the Persian Gulf being used as a base for German designs on India had been dispelled. In a word, a definite strategical objective had been achieved, and with the manifold calls on the military resources of the Empire prudence might have urged that it would be well to be content and to commit ourselves no deeper in this quarter. However, it soon became apparent that our inactivity was encouraging the Turks to plan a counter-offensive and had checked the tendency to join us which the Arabs had at first displayed. Indeed, the Jehad which the Turks were sedulously preaching was making considerable progress, early in the New Year the situation in Arabistan became unsatisfactory, and it grew clear that measures must be taken to protect the pipe-line to the oil-fields. Thus at a very early stage in the operations it became apparent that it is easier to embark on a campaign than to keep that campaign within the limits originally contemplated. The first increase in the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force was sanctioned on January 15th, 1915, just two months after the first landing, and on March 18th it was decided to bring 'Force D', as General

Barrett's command was officially known, up to the strength of an Army Corps by improvising a 12th Indian Division out of two brigades from India and one from Egypt, where the repulse of the Turkish attack on the Suez Canal had considerably improved the situation. A cavalry brigade was also to be added to the force.

At the beginning of April Sir John Nixon was sent to take command in Mesopotamia with orders to occupy the whole of the Basra vilayet and report on a subsequent advance on Baghdad. These measures taken for an increase of the force were only just in time. The Turks, from An Nasiriya on the Euphrates, where they had been collecting for some time, encouraged by the inactivity which had succeeded the first British irruption, had pushed forward to Barjisiya, close to Basra, where, however, they were met and defeated on April 14th by General Melliss. In this action at Shu'aiba, it should be noted, all but one of the Indian infantry units belonged to the Bombay Presidency. Faced by greatly superior numbers of hard-fighting Turks, the Bombay men proved themselves to be staunch and gallant troops, and their victory was worthy of the best traditions of the old Bombay Army.

Having repulsed the Turks on the west, General Nixon turned his attention to the east, cleared them out of Ahwaz and so secured the oil-pipe line. He then made a bold move to 'Amara, a modern town next in size to Baghdad, situated 200 miles up the Tigris. He was inadequately supplied with transport for such a move, for though the Mesopotamian force had been increased there had been no corresponding increase in the river transport. But the capture of 'Amara was of consequence politically because it was the seat of the Turkish provincial administration. Moreover, its occupation would have important military results because the Turkish division driven out of Ahwaz would have their retreat cut off. But before 'Amara could be occupied the Turkish troops had to be cleared out of their positions astride the Tigris just north of Qurna. On both banks of the river the ground was flooded here for miles, and the Turkish positions lay on the low hills which stood up like islands out of the floods. To attack them a large flotilla had to be collected of every kind, sort, and description of native river-craft, and the amphibious attack delivered on May 31st was known in the force as 'Townshend's

THE EUPHRATES AT NASIRIYA, 1916

A STREET IN NASIRIYA, 1916

THE EUPHRATES ABOVE NASIRIYA, 1916

Regatta', General Townshend being in charge of the advance. It was a fine piece of organization and met with complete success. But Townshend's pursuit was even more remarkable. Pressing on up the Tigris with a miscellaneous collection of gunboats, steam launches, and river steamers he soon outdistanced all the larger craft and arrived at 'Amara on June 3rd with some of the smaller vessels. From them he could collect no more than fifty officers and men to occupy a town of twelve thousand inhabitants, capture several hundreds of prisoners, and beat off the Turkish division retiring from Ahwaz, from which quarter it had been dislodged by a force under General Gorringe, the commander of the 12th Division. A few shells from an armed launch sufficed to make the Turks turn aside, and next morning the arrival of a river steamer with a battalion of infantry made the position secure. 'Amara, a town of considerable importance, had been secured, and Nixon's move had completely fulfilled its object.

Next he turned his attention to the Turks at Nasiriya on the Euphrates. There also he was successful. After considerable difficulties over transport and some really hard fighting in terribly hot weather, General Gorringe stormed the Turkish position and captured the garrison with 17 guns and a great quantity of war material on July 25th. Ahwaz, 'Amara, Nasiriya—right, centre, and left—were all three captured. The Turkish civil administration was wiped out. The military forces were smashed.

But once again a successful advance involved a yet further advance. By occupying Kut al Imara, a position of great strategic importance at the junction of the Tigris and the Shatt al Hai, we could consolidate our military position, cover both 'Amara and Nasiriya against a Turkish counter-stroke, concentrate our forces, and threaten Baghdad. General Nixon therefore proposed the advance, the authorities in India concurred, those at Whitehall sanctioned it, and accordingly General Townshend was ordered to carry it out. It was asking a great deal of the troops. The heat was frightful. Fever, malaria, diseases of various kinds became fearfully prevalent, and the medical arrangements were already barely adequate for the work that had to be done. In spite of this, however, and in spite of the inadequacy of the transport, General Townshend began his advance on September 1st. Kut is

about 150 miles from 'Amara and nearly 300 miles from Basra but with his usual skill and audacity Townshend successfully carried out the move. The Turks were strongly posted astride the Tigris 7 miles below Kut and offered a stubborn resistance when attacked on September 28th. It was the biggest battle of the campaign, but the attackers were completely successful and on September 29th Kut was occupied.

So far so good. But now arose the question whether a still further advance—to Baghdad itself—should be made. In sanctioning this last advance the authorities both at Simla and at Whitehall had expressly limited it to the occupation of Kut, and had refused to contemplate General Nixon's proposal of an advance to Baghdad or even General Townshend's suggestion that in the event of success he might be able to repeat the brilliant stroke by which he had followed up his victory at Qurna in May, that he might perhaps rush Baghdad as he had rushed 'Amara. But an advance to Baghdad, another 150 miles or more by river from Kut, was a far more difficult and risky business even than the advance from 'Amara to Kut. Already the strain on the transport was fully as great as it could possibly stand, and, brilliantly as the troops had fought in the capture of the Turkish lines, there were limits to their capacity for conquest. Both General Townshend and General Nixon were of opinion that a further advance should be made, but only provided that the forces in Mesopotamia were largely increased. With the present forces Baghdad might be captured but not held. The Home Government were impressed with the great political and military advantages of an occupation of Baghdad. Prospects in Gallipoli were uncertain, and it seemed likely that the Germans would break through to Constantinople. Government had need therefore of a great and striking success in the East. They did not wish the advance to be made with insufficient forces and would make every effort to supply the necessary troops. But they wanted the advance made. The Viceroy of India thought the right policy was to take the risk and occupy Baghdad without delay, and the Secretary of State for India telegraphed on October 23rd that if Nixon thought that the force he had was sufficient he might march on Baghdad.

For this enterprise General Townshend had only about 11,000 effective men, as his division, the 6th, was worn down

by the excessive hardships they had had to endure. British and Indian units alike were below strength and had received insufficient drafts to replace their casualties.[1] General Nixon was not in a position to reinforce him, for the entire force in Mesopotamia at this time did not exceed 25,000 men, and these were scattered over a vast extent of country. The march from Kut to Baghdad, 100 miles, would have to be made on foot, for the water transport would not suffice for more than the carriage of supplies. Moreover, information came in that the enemy was strongly posted behind a double line of defences at Ctesiphon, 16 miles from Baghdad. Townshend tells us that he protested against advancing with so inadequate a force against an enemy so strongly placed and who might be soon receiving heavy reinforcements, while he himself, owing to the deficiencies of transport, could not expect any additions to his force for a very long time. But when ordered to advance he advanced swiftly so as to forestall the enemy. He arrived at Ctesiphon on November 22nd and attacked at daybreak.

He came very near to complete and brilliant victory.[2] With fine impetuosity the British and Indian troops stormed the entrenched position, occupied the first line, made a break in the second, and were pressing on to capture the guns in rear when the situation was changed by the arrival of Turkish reinforcements. It was a hard blow for the British. For the Turks in gradually augmenting numbers pressed them out of the second line and they had to content themselves with holding the first line. Here Townshend remained for the night and the three following days, gradually evacuating his wounded down the river. Then, finding that the enemy was being still further reinforced while his own transport, being fully occupied with the wounded, could not bring up supplies, he had reluctantly to retire.

This retirement was carried out with the utmost skill. On the night of November 25th Townshend left Ctesiphon, just evading an attack in force which the Turks had planned and which they attempted to put into operation a few hours too late. By daring use of his cavalry the British general

[1] 1,500 British on their way to Mesopotamia had been diverted to fill the gaps in the 10th (Irish) Division ordered from Gallipoli to Salonika.

[2] The loss of his only aeroplane together with the information which its observer had collected was a fatal misfortune.

was able to fend off the enemy while he withdrew his tired forces, reduced by 4,500 men from the numbers with which he had set out. Owing to difficulties in navigation the supply and transport barges were delayed, an enforced halt had to be made which enabled the Turks to catch up the retreating force, and on December 1st Townshend found himself compelled to give battle at Umm at Tubul, very roughly half-way between Ctesiphon and Kut, in order to secure his further retreat. The Turks attacked in great strength, attempting to turn his right in addition to attacking him in front. But the frontal attack was enfiladed by British gunboat fire from the river, as well as pounded by the artillery fire which Townshend concentrated on it, and was broken up, while the flanking force was charged by the British and Indian cavalry and thrown into confusion. Townshend though outnumbered had beaten off the attack, and before the enemy had time to rally for a further attack had recommenced his retreat. On December 3rd he had by his coolness, resourcefulness, and courage completed one of the most difficult operations in warfare and brought his force safely into Kut. He had also given the enemy such a shaking that they were unable to invest Kut immediately, and he had a few days in hand in which he could send his wounded downstream.

Here at Kut Townshend had expected to be invested, but he had expected also to be relieved within a comparatively short time. He was unaware how badly for the time being the British were faring in other parts. The attacks in Gallipoli, though they had done great service in destroying the flower of the Turkish Army, had failed to open the Dardanelles. The Gallipoli peninsula had to be evacuated, and large numbers of Turkish troops were consequently set free for service in Mesopotamia. British reinforcements were being sent to Mesopotamia, but the opening of the Salonika operations had gravely complicated the transport arrangements and had seriously delayed the movement of the Indian Corps from France. Moreover, the transport arrangements in Mesopotamia were wholly inadequate. No sufficient attention even now had been paid to them, the requisite type of craft were hard to find, took time to build and to send out to the East, and it was impossible to push the sorely needed reinforcements up the Tigris even when they reached Basra.

SIR CHARLES TOWNSHEND

Townshend, however, was still full of resource and fight. Through all the retreat he had kept his force well in hand. He had preserved that strong firm discipline which is absolutely essential in such conditions; and through all trials and adversities he had retained the confidence of his troops.

The enemy had given him a week's respite before attacking. On December 10th the Turks made their first attempt to take Kut by storm. Five times that day did they assault the little town and five times were they thrown back. Next day under cover of a heavy artillery fire they made a mass attack, which to all appearances should have succeeded. But this also failed. Thereafter they fell back upon their batteries and upon rifle fire till December 24th, when, having received reinforcements, they commenced a great bombardment and succeeded in making a breach in the defences. At the breach a column of some 6,000 infantry was hurled. The British had wired the breach, but the Turks by weight of numbers bore down the wiring and pressed forward, only, however, to find an inner line of defence. They tried again and again to carry this line but never succeeded. After losing 2,000 men they had to call off the attack, and never again did they attempt to carry Kut by assault.

Meanwhile reinforcements for the British Army were arriving in Mesopotamia. By this time the military situation in India had much improved; even the 'second line' Territorial battalions had had a year's training and were fit for any service, and it proved possible to produce three additional brigades, numbered 34th, 35th, and 36th, for service in Mesopotamia. The Territorials provided the British battalions and the attached artillery, and the assistance given by Nepal in the shape of a contingent of several battalions set free the Indian units. These brigades, which began reaching Basra early in December, were originally intended to have been withdrawn when the Lahore and Meerut Divisions arrived, but this plan was never carried out. Of these brigades, the 34th was sent up the Euphrates to reinforce Nasiriya, and the 35th and 36th took part in the operations for the relief of Kut. Owing to the lack of transport, however, the newcomers were obliged to spend week after week in inactivity at Basra. Sir John Nixon had resigned owing to ill-health and had been succeeded by Sir Percy Lake, under whom was General Aylmer, now com-

missioned to lead a force for the relief of Kut. The troops had to be pushed up the river, more or less as they arrived, irrespective of their normal units, and improvised formations added to the difficulties of commanding officers. The relieving column reached ʿAli Gharbi on Christmas Day, but owing to transport difficulties was not able to attack, and while transport was being collected further Turkish reinforcements arrived, and the winter rain fell, turning the vast swamps into shallow lakes and rendering the country almost impassable. Nevertheless Aylmer attacked under the impression which prevailed outside Kut that the garrison was in greater straits for food than was at this date actually the case. Had more time been given for organizing the operations, had more powerful artillery been available and accurate aeroplane reconnaissance of the Turkish positions been possible, the effort might well have succeeded. As it was, attacking on both banks of the Tigris from January 6th to 9th, Aylmer fought an action at Shaikh Saʿad, when the Turks fell back after a reputed loss of 4,500 men, and on the 13th he took the enemy's position at Orah, but with heavy loss. The Turks then retired on the Umm al Hanna position 15 miles below Kut. This position consisted of five lines of trenches, each 280 yards behind the other, and had the Tigris on one side and a flooded swamp on the other. It should only have been attacked after previous heavy bombardment. But Aylmer felt bound to attack though he had not the guns or the ammunition for a proper bombardment, nor aeroplanes to reconnoitre. Consequently when he attacked, on January 21st, 1916, he was unable to break through. He suffered a loss of 2,741 men and was brought to a halt.

The question now was how long could Kut hold out. After Aylmer's failure at Hanna, Townshend on the 24th of January reduced the rations of bread and meat by a half. The town was ransacked for supplies, and much hidden grain was discovered. Corn was economized, partly by serving out dried potato meal and partly by mixing the bread ration with barley meal and atta, and partly by slaughtering the battery bullocks and horses.

On March 8th to 9th, the whole of the Lahore and Meerut Divisions having by this time come up, Aylmer made yet another great attempt to relieve Kut. This time he attacked on the right bank of the Tigris on what was called the Es Sinn

position. A long night march was made across the desert. But the troops had arrived late at the rendezvous, and they came into position after daybreak in a fatigued sleepy state. Nevertheless the Turks were surprised, and had the attack been at once pressed home victory would have been in sight. Unfortunately, delay while the position was being bombarded gave the enemy time to bring up reinforcements, and they were able to put up a strong resistance when at last the attack was made. The British, fighting with determination, gained a footing in the centre of the position threatening the Dujaila redoubt, but the enemy showed no signs of retiring and, looking to the weariness of the troops and the want of water, Aylmer abandoned the attack at nightfall.

The Turks now called upon Townshend to surrender. He simply refused and still further reduced the rations. The enemy on their side pressed both their bombardment and air raids. By the beginning of April the supplies of grain at length failed, and the garrison fed itself on horse meat.

Meanwhile a fresh effort at relief was being organized. Some additional Territorial battalions, chiefly cyclists, had been sent out to India together with some Garrison Battalions, and nearly a dozen Indian units which had been on service in France or Egypt had returned home. It thus became possible to organize in India yet another three brigades, numbered 41st, 42nd, and 43rd, and to dispatch them to Mesopotamia, while the 13th Division under General Maude was sent thither from Egypt, to which it had moved from Gallipoli where it had already co-operated with Indian troops on the slopes of Sari Bair.

On April 5th the roar of guns led the hard-pressed garrison to hope that at the eleventh hour relief might yet come. A third attempt to relieve them was being made, General Gorringe being now in command of the relieving force. The enemy's position at Sanniyat was being attacked by the 13th Division. The British advance was made on both sides of the river. The enemy were turned out of the Hanna maze of trenches, and on the morning of April 6th the 7th—the Meerut—Division attacked the Sanniyat position itself. This position was even stronger than those already taken, and the Meerut Division, despite heavy losses, could do no more than establish itself some way short of the trenches. To make

matters worse the Tigris broke its banks and overflowed most of the ground, and for the next two days the floods prevented further action. On the 9th the assault was resumed by the 13th Division, but though it carried the first line of defences it could get no farther nor even retain its gains. An effort was now made on the right bank of the Tigris, where the Turkish front line was 4 miles west of Sanniyat. On April 17th the enemy were pressed back for some distance and lost heavily in a furious counter-attack on the Lahore Division, but here also floods impeded progress and no break-through could be achieved. At Sanniyat too the enemy still held on, repulsing a last attack in which some of the Meerut Division did for a time effect a lodgement in the front trenches, and it was clear that it was impossible to reach Kut.

Some amount of flour was sent into Kut by aeroplane, and an attempt was made by the *Julnar*, one of the fast steamers of the flotilla, to break through the Turkish lines with provisions. But the ship was wrecked, and on April 26th Townshend was ordered to make terms with the Turks. The only terms the Turks would accept were unconditional surrender. Townshend had made his preparations for surrender by blowing up his guns, smashing his rifles, and dumping ammunition into the river at night, and on April 29th, after maintaining the defence for 147 days, he surrendered.

The story of Kut is a tragic page in the history of the Empire at War and of the Indian Army in particular. There was gallantry and devotion and tenacity in the defence, there was all this in the attempts at relief. It was not for want of courage and self-sacrifice that the Lahore and Meerut Divisions and their comrades failed to get through. There may have been tactical errors, the Tigris may have played a part in the operations which was beyond human power to control or combat, there may certainly have been insufficient appreciation and knowledge outside of the situation inside, leading to hurry, confusion, premature efforts which were therefore unsuccessful. But the root of the failure was not tactical or even due to imperfect information. It was administrative: it lay perhaps even more in the failure to let policy be guided by considerations of a practical nature. The inadequacy of the transport services has been laid bare in the Report of the Mesopotamia Commission. It was due in large measure to imperfect appre-

ciation of the conditions prevailing in Mesopotamia and the special difficulties of the country. The break-down of the medical arrangements, the saddest feature of the whole grim story, was in the main a matter of transport. Inasmuch as at this time the operations in Mesopotamia were still being administered by India, the Indian administration must be admitted to have broken down under a task for which it must also be admitted it had never been organized. But the medical break-down, the inadequacy of the transport, the consequent confusion and muddle at the front which led to troops being thrown into action regardless of their proper organization and formations, come back in the long run to the way in which one step led to others not previously contemplated, to the impossibility of limiting commitments, to the need for anticipating the consequences of action and for the competent study of problems and policies prior to decisions.

The surrender at an earlier stage would have disastrously affected British prestige throughout Asia. As it was, the gallantry, skill, and dogged determination of the defence had largely discounted the evil results of an eventual surrender. Moreover strong and important bodies of the enemy had been kept for four months tied down to an enterprise which brought them very little benefit even when successful and which prevented their carrying on operations elsewhere which might have been more fruitful of enduring results. The failure too did not take the world by surprise; those who were watching the twin struggle against the Turk and the Tigris and against starvation could have had but little hope for weeks before Kut fell. The determination both of the defence and of the would-be relievers may well have helped to inspire confidence in India and elsewhere that in the long run we should make good.

With the necessity for relieving Kut no longer existing, the British could pause, collect themselves together, take stock of the whole situation, and deliberately mature plans for the future conduct of the war in Mesopotamia. One chief result of this deliberation was the appointment of the commander of the 13th Division, Lieutenant-General Sir Stanley Maude, to the chief command. Sir Stanley had served in the Coldstream Guards and earned distinction both as a staff officer

and brigadier in France and as commander of a division during the later stages of the Gallipoli campaign. At the head of that division he had done fine work already in Mesopotamia ; if his men had failed to get through to Kut they had achieved some striking successes, and it was the Tigris even more than the Turk which had beaten them. He had made the division and inspired it with a fine fighting spirit. He was conspicuous for two unlike but complementary qualities—for daring and for meticulous attention to detail. He could conceive the bold general outlines of a plan and show great daring in execution. Yet he could be exceedingly careful over every detail in its preparation. Of almost equal importance was it that the control of the operations was now taken over by the General Staff at the War Office, where General Sir William Robertson was in charge. India henceforward supplied large quantities of stores and supplies and much of the man-power, but the military policy to be followed passed out of the hands of the Government of India.

Sir Stanley Maude took over command in Mesopotamia on August 28th, 1916, and had at once to decide whether he would remain on the defensive or assume the offensive. The Turks and their German tutors, elated over the capture of Kut, were contemplating nothing less than an advance on India. Between Turkey and India stood Persia and Afghanistan—both Mohammedan countries whom it might be easy to win over. Persia in any case was weak and could offer small resistance. Afghanistan was strong and if hostile might be troublesome. On the other hand, if favourable she might be of great help, and German and Turkish agents had gone thither to sound the Amir and secure him if possible for the Germans and the Turks.

The enemy's plans appeared at this time to be to contain the British forces in Mesopotamia and threaten them by an attack down the Euphrates, while the main advance was made through Persia towards India. It was an inspiring project and might have materialized into something very dangerous to our Indian Empire if it had not been met by a blow which at once shivered the whole grandiose scheme to pieces. Maude saw clearly and immediately that the way to defend was to attack, that the way to preserve India was to assail Baghdad. Success in that venture would moreover go

far to re-establish British prestige, to impress the Amir and the frontier tribes, and to assist General Murray's operations in Sinai. If he stood on the defensive he would have to scatter his forces to guard against attack at many points. If he attacked he could concentrate his forces, for he would compel the enemy to meet his assault.

To attack Baghdad Maude therefore at once prepared. His predecessor, Sir Percy Lake, had done much since the fall of Kut to improve the port of Basra, together with the service on the lines of communication, and to develop the resources of the country so as to be able to get as much as possible from it. But a very great deal yet had to be done before the army would be in a position to assault the enemy's immensely strong positions in front of Kut and to advance on Baghdad.

In the first place the health of the troops had to be restored after the fearful heat of a Mesopotamian summer. Until they had recovered from the exhaustion which such heat causes they could not possibly respond to the calls which would have to be made upon them. Then all the arrangements for the supply of food, munitions and stores, and for care of the sick and wounded, had to be perfected. Three classes of transport were being employed—river, rail, and road; and on the road were employed both motor and animal transport. The Directorate of Inland Water Transport was strengthened by accessions of men and material from overseas, as well as by additional river-craft. Night and day an endless chain of river-craft passed up and down the river, thereby assuring the maintenance of the troops at the front. Then a light railway was constructed up from Qurna to ʿAmara and another line laid from Shaikh Saʿad up to the front. An efficient motor transport service was also organized. These preparations went ceaselessly forward, and drafts from England and from India brought the shattered units up to strength. A steady stream of reinforcements kept moving up the Tigris.[1] All the

[1] Many tired units were sent back to India and replaced by fresh battalions. Several of the units taken at Kut were re-formed on the Lines of Communication and the whole force was reorganized. The 6th and 12th Indian Divisions were broken up, two new divisions being formed, a 14th on the Tigris line, a 15th on the Euphrates. The force on the Tigris was divided into two corps, the Ist under Lieutenant-General Sir A. S. Cobbe, V.C., consisting of the Lahore and Meerut Divisions, the IIIrd under Lieutenant-General W. R. Marshall, who had till then been commanding a division at Salonika, including Maude's old 13th Division and the newly formed 14th Indian Division.

necessities of an army about to assume the offensive were accumulated at the front, and by the beginning of December the general concentration up stream at Shaikh Sa'ad was completed.

The Turks still occupied the same positions on the Tigris. On the left bank they held the Sanniyat position, where they had withstood three assaults in April and which they had further strengthened. They had also constructed successive positions between Sanniyat and Kut, 15 miles in rear; and had entrenched the river bank between those two places. With the river on one flank and the great marsh on the other these positions were immensely strong. On the right bank of the Tigris the Turks held a line beginning 3 miles north-east of Kut, that is, considerably up stream from Sanniyat. From that point the line ran south-west across the Khudhaira Bend to the river Hai, the line of which was occupied for several miles with posts and Arab mounted auxiliaries.

The weak point in the enemy's position was that his communications were peculiarly open to attack once we had established ourselves on the Hai. The marsh secured his left flank but it also prevented him working round that flank to strike at Maude's communications; and to resist an attack from the Hai upon the British communications the British troops were well placed. Maude therefore, feeling no anxiety as to his flanks, determined to capture the Hai position, and then, crossing the Tigris, to attack the Turkish line of communications and compel them thereby to withdraw from the powerful Sanniyat position.

But the enemy were to be led to suppose that, as before, an attack on Sanniyat was our real object. The Ist Corps under Lieutenant-General Sir Alexander Cobbe therefore began bombarding this position on the morning of the 13th December 1916. Having thus attracted the enemy's attention to that flank, Lieutenant-General Marshall's IIIrd Corps and the Cavalry Division were during the night of the 13th–14th dispatched across the desert on the right bank of the Tigris to the Hai. The enemy was taken by surprise. The British were able to cross the Hai at two points and during the remainder of December extend their pressure northward and westward. Our position was then consolidated. Roads were built, and the light railway from Shaikh Sa'ad extended towards the Hai. By this successful move Maude directly threatened the

enemy's line of communications and rendered Nasariya safe from attack.

Still the enemy were not yet cleared from the right bank of the Tigris, and from their position in the Khudhaira Bend, east of Kut, threatened our line of communications, for at high flood they could inundate portions of it. Maude therefore decided to clear the bend, and entrusted the conduct of the operations to General Cobbe. The attack began on the 5th January 1917, the Lahore Division being principally engaged, and severe fighting took place till the 19th. The Turks were in a strong position and fought stubbornly. They held a well-prepared line some 2,600 yards long, facing east. The ground in front was flat and bare. 'At the southern end, 200 yards from the river and parallel to it, was a double row of sand-hills, on which the enemy had constructed a strong point with covered-in machine gun emplacements. The front of the position was swept by fire from both flanks from the left bank of the river. There was a second line in the rear, at distances varying from 500 to 1,000 yards from the front line, whilst between the two were trenches and nullahs prepared for defence. The southern portion of the second line, and some sand-hills 400 yards behind it, formed a last position, and the garrison had communication with the left bank by means of ferries, which, owing to the conformation of the river bend, were protected from direct rifle and machine gun fire so long as this retired position was held.'

Against such formidable lines of defence our troops could only make progress by slow degrees. Approach was made by sapping. Some 25,000 yards of trenches were dug under trying conditions of rain and exposure to enfilade and direct fire. On the 7th and 8th bombardments were carried out, and on the 9th an assault was made on the southern end of the Turkish line. Six hundred yards of the line were captured without much initial loss; but a thick mist hindered artillery support and facilitated a counter-attack. Some hand-to-hand fighting followed, but the 1/1st Gurkhas and 105th Mahrattas on the left succeeded in reaching the river bend and in inflicting heavy losses upon the enemy. On the right also our troops gained ground, and the Manchesters, a Frontier Rifle Regiment—the 59th—and a detachment of Sikh Pioneers—the 34th—beat off a Turkish counter-attack.

We resumed our attack on the 10th and pressed the enemy back trench by trench to his last position. This we attacked, but without success, on the 11th, and a pause became necessary. The ground in front of our troops was open and was commanded from both flanks at close quarters. Covered approaches and trenches in which to assemble the troops prior to assault had to be constructed. The forward trench system was completed by the 17th, and one by one the enemy's advanced posts were captured. On the night of the 17th/18th we took and lost the last remaining redoubt which enfiladed the attack. On the 18th we took it again and held it. We were preparing for a final assault on the 19th when the enemy during the night of the 18th/19th retired across the river.

The fighting throughout had been very severe and mainly hand-to-hand. The success attained was due very largely to the gallantry of the troops. As General Maude wrote: 'The Turks are very stubborn fighters, especially in trenches, but our men fairly beat them at their own game and with bomb and bayonet drove them steadily back, foot by foot.' But the success was also due in part to the fact that Maude was at the same time raiding the enemy's position at Sanniyat and threatening him on the Hai, so that the Turks were never quite certain where the real attack was being made.

This threat at the Hai salient was afterwards turned into a serious attack and carried out by Lieutenant-General Marshall. From the 11th of January he set to work constructing trenches reaching out towards the extensive trench system which the Turks held astride the Hai river near its junction with the Tigris until his trenches were within 400 yards of the enemy's front line. On the 25th he attacked, and from that day till the 4th of February, when the enemy was finally cleared off the eastern bank of the Hai, continual hard hand-to-hand fighting took place. The Turks counter-attacked incessantly, and it was only through the splendid fighting quality of the infantry, seconded by the bold support rendered by the artillery, and by ceaseless work carried out by the Royal Flying Corps, that success was achieved and the enemy finally driven across the river. It had been General Maude's intention to launch the cavalry against the enemy's rear, but a heavy thunderstorm burst over the district, flooding the Marsh of Jassan and rendering progress impossible.

General Marshall was then directed to attack the Dahra Bend, which was above Kut, and the capture of which would threaten the Turkish line of retreat. It was a horse-shoe bend bristling with trenches and commanded from across the river on three sides by hostile batteries and machine guns. By the exercise of great skill in hiding his real intentions and making the enemy believe he meant to attack on their left, whereas his true attack was in the centre, he was able, by the 16th of February, to clear the bend of the enemy, inflicting heavy casualties and capturing some 2,000 prisoners. In this attack the 102nd Bombay Grenadiers [1] especially distinguished themselves, capturing an important position by assault across the open and retaining it in face of two strong counter-attacks.

The enemy had now, after two months of strenuous fighting, been driven entirely from the right bank of the Tigris in the neighbourhood of Kut. General Maude held the river bank on one side, the Turks retained their position on the other. They also still retained the extremely strong Sanniyat position. But Maude's generalship was beginning to tell. If he could cross the river he would cut their communications and make their whole position untenable. And he could keep them in constant doubt as to whether he would make his main attack at Sanniyat or at some point on the river and, if the latter, what point.

During Marshall's attack on Dahra Bend, Cobbe maintained constant activity along the Sanniyat front, and as soon as the bend was cleared Maude ordered him to attack Sanniyat. This attack, carried out on the 17th of February, was only partially successful, but it served its purpose of attracting the enemy's attention to the Sanniyat front. Further attacks on Sanniyat followed, daily artillery barrages were carried out, and feints for crossing the river near Kut were made with the result that the enemy moved infantry and guns into the Kut peninsula—a position from which they could not afterwards be retransferred to the actual point of crossing in time to be of any use. In the meanwhile secret preparations were made by Maude for crossing the Tigris as far west as possible, that is about Shumran. Positions for guns and

[1] The 102nd Bombay Grenadiers are one of the oldest Indian regiments.

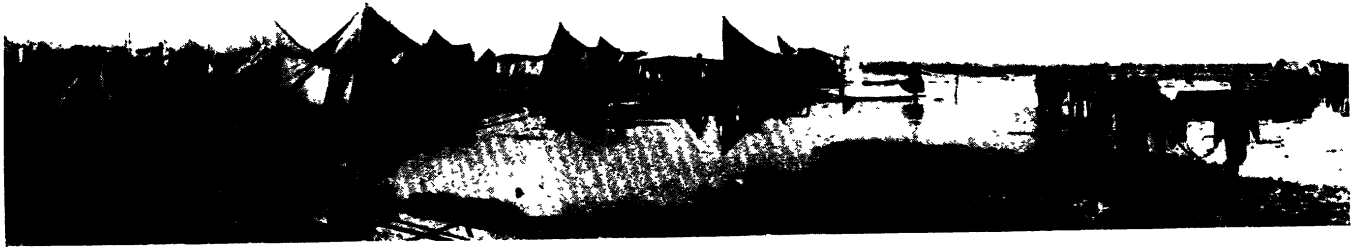
machine guns to support the crossing were selected, approaches were made, and crews were trained to man the pontoons.

Just before daybreak on the 23rd of February Maude made his fateful stroke. The 2nd Norfolks,[1] crossing by a ferry immediately below where the bridge was to be thrown, caught the enemy completely by surprise. Two battalions of Gurkhas, the 1/2nd and 2/9th, ferrying across a little lower down, were met by a staggering fire but landed and made good. Our artillery vigorously engaged the enemy, and the construction of the bridge at the point selected—the south end of the Shumran Bend—was begun. At 4.30 p.m. it was ready for traffic; and by nightfall our troops 'had secured a position 2,000 yards in depth, covering the bridgehead, while ahead of this line our patrols were acting vigorously against the enemy's advanced detachments'. The infantry of one division, the 14th Indian Division, was across, and another, the 13th, was ready to follow. A fatal blow had been struck from which the enemy could not possibly recover.

Early on the 24th our troops resumed the advance. Our cavalry, artillery, and another division crossed the bridge. The enemy put up a very stubborn resistance, but it was the resistance of the rear-guard only and the main body was in full retreat. The attack at Shumran had had its effect at Sanniyat also. While the crossing was proceeding on the 23rd Cobbe had attacked and secured the third and fourth lines, and on the following day he cleared the enemy out of the remainder of a position which the Turks had thought to be impregnable. The final capture fell to the Meerut Division which had suffered such heavy losses at this point in 1916.

The Turkish rear-guards retired during the night of the 24th, and on the 25th Marshall and the cavalry moved north-west. Eight miles from Shumran the Turks had entrenched themselves and offered fight, but after a severe struggle they were evicted. By abandoning immense quantities of equipment, ammunition, rifles, vehicles, and stores of all kinds they were able to continue their flight to Baghdad. But our gunboat flotilla managed to inflict heavy losses on the retreating columns.

[1] This battalion, whose feat was perhaps the finest individual exploit of the campaign, had been one of Townshend's old 6th Division and had been re-formed since the fall of Kut.



CAMP AT ARAB VILLAGE, 1916

KUT AT THE TIME OF ITS RECAPTURE, 1917

Maude had to pause for some days to organize his advance on Baghdad itself. But there was no intention of pausing a day longer than could be helped, and on the 5th of March, supplies having been brought up, the advance was resumed. The strongly entrenched Ctesiphon position, which the enemy would have held but for our rapid advance, was found unoccupied. On the 7th our advance-guard came in contact with the enemy on the line of the Diyala river. This position was turned by throwing a bridge across the Tigris, from the far bank of which it was possible to enfilade the Turks. This helped Marshall to cross the Diyala in face of stubborn opposition on the 10th and drive the enemy from their last important position before Baghdad.

In the meanwhile the cavalry, followed by a portion of Cobbe's Corps, had proceeded along the right bank of the Tigris and driven the enemy from their position at Shawa Khan. Our troops suffered greatly from want of water; and dust-storms rendered reconnaissance and co-ordination almost impossible. But following the Decauville Railway as a guide we occupied Baghdad railway station at 5.55 a.m. on the 11th of March; and on the same morning Marshall advanced rapidly on Baghdad and entered the city.

By the capture of Baghdad a blow was struck at the Turks which wiped out their triumph at Kut, and shattered to pieces the German dream of an attack on India. The news of the victory served greatly to restore British prestige in the East and to hearten people in the homeland; they could see that in Maude they possessed a fighting general of real military genius. Sound strategy, careful and systematic preparation, excellent and effective organization, skilful tactics combined with determination and hard fighting on the part of the troops, had combined to achieve a success as important as it was dramatic.

By the end of March 1917 British columns had driven the enemy north-east, north, and west in divergent directions along the Diyala, Tigris, and Euphrates respectively, and advanced troops had established a screen covering Baghdad. In the course of these operations more than one sharp action had taken place and several useful successes were won, notably by General Cobbe at Mushahida on March 14th. But it was still necessary, in order to consolidate our position and

secure Baghdad, which was an open city devoid of means of defence, to prosecute operations against the shattered but reinforced XVIIIth Turkish Corps with which Maude had been so recently engaged, whilst keeping watch on the XIIIth Corps which was falling back from Ba'quba before the Russians.

On April 2nd the British, after some sharp fighting extending over a fortnight, effected a junction with the Russian General Baratoff's troops about Qizil Ribat, and when the Russians were well established on the line of the Diyala, Maude was able to resume operations along both banks of the Tigris. On the 8th he attacked and defeated an enemy's force of about 4,000 rifles with 200 sabres and 16 guns at Balad Station, and on the 9th General Cobbe occupied Harbe. A sudden advance of the Turkish XIIIth Corps against General Marshall's troops on the left bank of the Tigris was defeated on April 11th, and the enemy were pushed back into the Jabal Hamrin on the following days.

Maude then turned his attention to the detachment of the XVIIIth Turkish Corps holding the passage of the Shatt al 'Adhaim. The channel which our troops had to cross was narrow but full of quicksands which caused delay. In spite of this a bridge was thrown across on April 18th, our infantry cleared the loop of the river, and the Cavalry Brigade, skilfully handled and pushing resolutely on, notwithstanding the heat and want of water, succeeded in turning the enemy's retreat into a rout. Only a small fraction of the troops opposed to us effected their escape.

The enemy's opposition on the left bank having been completely broken, a further advance was now ordered on the right bank with the object of capturing Samarra. The Tigris was bridged at Sinija on April 19th and the river-head was moved up to that place. The enemy were holding a strong position covering Samarra and extending across the Baghdad–Samarra railway. The Dujail canal, diagonally situated across the line of the British advance, 'was a considerable obstacle, with banks 40 feet high in some places, and containing water 6 feet deep and 20 to 25 feet broad; and its banks had been prepared in places so as to bring enfilade fire to bear upon the ground south of it.' This strong position 'was held by some 6,700 rifles with 200 sabres and 31 guns, whilst in the vicinity of Samarra were reserves consisting of some 4,000 rifles with

500 sabres and 15 guns.' On April 21st the position on the north side of the canal was resolutely attacked by the Black Watch and 1/8th Gurkhas, and, after gaining the position, then losing it and subsequently regaining it, they were able finally to establish themselves in it. An attack by the Seaforths and 28th and 92nd Punjabis launched south of the canal was carried out with fine dash and gallantry across 2,000 yards of ground devoid of cover, and by 7.25 a.m. the enemy's front line, some 700 yards long, was in our hands. During the remainder of the day and the succeeding night the British consolidated their position, and on the next day the 28th Brigade pushed forward to continue the work. They, too, met with a most stubborn opposition, and it was only after a long day of fierce and strenuous fighting that the Leicesters, well backed up by the 51st and 53rd Sikhs and 56th Rifles, at last took the position. The Turks counter-attacked in force, but the 19th Brigade came up to support the hard-pressed 28th and checked the Turks, and then the 21st Brigade went through and, pushing on, found the enemy had gone right back. It had been a desperate fight and the losses were heavy, but the Turkish resistance was completely broken. By 10 a.m. on the 23rd Samarra Station was secured, while Samarra Town, on the left bank, was occupied on the 24th and a post established there, the enemy offering no further resistance but retreating on Tikrit.

'As a result of the fighting during the month of April the enemy's XIIIth and XVIIIth Corps had been driven back on divergent lines, the former into the Jabal Hamrin and the latter to Tikrit. The XIIIth Corps had twice taken the offensive with results disastrous to itself, and the XVIIIth Corps had been defeated and driven from its selected positions on four occasions. Our total captures for the month amounted to some 3,000 prisoners and 17 guns, besides a considerable quantity of rolling stock and booty of all kinds.' The objectives Maude had set out to reach had been secured, and the spirit of the enemy's troops was broken. The fighting had imposed a severe strain upon our men, for the heat, the constant dust-storms, and the occasional absence of water, tested their stamina very highly. But, says Maude, 'as conditions became more trying the spirit of the troops seemed to rise, and to the end of this period they maintained the same high standard of

discipline, gallantry in action, and endurance which had been so noticeable throughout the Army during the operations which led up to the fall of Baghdad and subsequently.'

The increasing heat now necessitated the redistribution of the troops for the hot weather, and every provision possible under existing conditions had to be made to guard against the trying period which was rapidly approaching. Whilst it was necessary to hold the positions which had been so bravely won and to strengthen them defensively, the bulk of the troops were withdrawn into reserve and distributed in suitable camps along the river banks, where they could obtain the benefit of the breezes and a liberal supply of water for drinking, bathing, and washing.

During the latter part of June, July, and the beginning of August the heat was intense, and an attempt to advance on the line of the Euphrates had in consequence to be abandoned. Movements could not be undertaken by either side without grave risk of incurring substantial casualties from heat stroke and heat exhaustion. The troops enjoyed a well-earned rest but were by no means idle. Our hold over the area was made secure, defensive positions were prepared, and training was carried out. Manly sports, too, which are so essential to the well-being of the soldier, especially when temporarily inactive in the military sense, were freely indulged in with beneficial results to the health and future fitness of the Army. Arrangements were also made for a proportion of the troops to proceed to India on leave, and those who had been on service for a considerable time derived much benefit from the change and rest thus obtained.

With the arrival of rather cooler weather active operations could be resumed. In September the Turks on the Euphrates were attacked by Major-General Sir H. T. Brooking with the 15th Indian Division which had been brought up to the front from Nasiriya. On September 29th the enemy were defeated at Ramadi some miles above Al Falluja, and the whole Turkish force was surrounded and forced to surrender. At the beginning of October Lieutenant-General Marshall was directed to clear the left bank of the Diyala and occupy the Jabal Hamrin astride of that river in order that the control of the canals might be in our hands, and this he succeeded in doing early in October. The Turks in the middle of October showed signs of activity north of Samarra, but General Maude made a

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surprise attack on them on November 2nd, and three days later the Ist Corps captured Tikrit after a hard fight against a well-posted Turkish rear-guard.

The Army of Mesopotamia had now to suffer an irreparable loss in the death, from cholera, on November 19th, of its brave and loved commander. General Maude by his genius had altered the whole face of affairs in Mesopotamia. He had taken over an army whose moral had been severely tried by their failure to relieve Kut, and whose health had been sapped by a very trying climate ; but in a few months he had, says his successor General W. R. Marshall, by his hard work and great gifts of organization, clear-sightedness, and determination, and above all by his intense sympathy with and love of his soldiers, restored its fighting efficiency, reorganized the transport service, provided for the proper feeding of the troops, and made them as comfortable as circumstances would permit, yet never relaxed in training and discipline, so that when he at length moved forward his Force never looked back. Moreover, though an officer of the British Service with no experience of Indian troops, he won their confidence no less than that of his white troops. At his death the moral of the Army was magnificent, whilst organization and training had reached a high level of efficiency.

By the time of General Maude's death all the main objectives in Mesopotamia had been fully attained. But in the interests of the Palestine campaign it was essential to maintain continuous pressure on the Turks, and our soldiers were better employed in causing additional losses to the enemy and making further local gains than if they had remained inactive. Moreover, shortly before General Maude's death it had been found possible to organize an additional division, the 17th Indian, mainly out of troops hitherto employed on the line of communications, where the garrisons could now be safely reduced. General Monro's great expansion of the Indian Army was also beginning to make itself felt, and before the end of 1917 enough units were dispatched to Mesopotamia to form yet another division, the 18th Indian. These formations were not, however, intended to increase the force in Mesopotamia but to set free the Lahore and Meerut Divisions to reinforce General Allenby, as for the operations to be undertaken in Mesopotamia the force in the country was amply sufficient.

The moral of the Turkish forces was as low as the British was high, and desertions were frequent. Accordingly General Marshall at the beginning of December entrusted to Lieutenant-General Sir R. Egerton [1] the task of attacking that part of the XIIIth Turkish Corps which was holding the Diyala river above Al Mansuriya. The Turkish forces were driven from their positions, a bridge-head at Qizil Ribat was established, and on the 9th of December Khanaqin was occupied. Then early in 1918 came a move up the Euphrates, Major-General Sir H. T. Brooking was ordered to attack Hit, and on March 9th that town was occupied by the British. The retreating enemy were pursued; Ana was captured and over 5,000 prisoners with 12 guns and great quantities of ammunition. In this pursuit magnificent work was done by the 7th Cavalry Brigade under Brigadier-General R. A. Cassels, as well as by the light armoured motor batteries.

In addition to these direct military actions General Marshall now undertook the military occupation and civil control of the whole of the Euphrates line from Falluja to Nasiriya, and by these means encouraged and assisted the development of the rich agricultural lands in that area. Various villages were garrisoned, and through communication by river between Basra and Falluja was established. The development of the local resources throughout the lower Euphrates valley was thus controlled. Many hundred tons of seed grain were planted, and a branch line to Hilla was constructed to bring in the produce.

The British Commander was anxious to avoid arousing religious animosity, and had therefore refrained from occupying certain holy towns such as Karbala and An Najaf in this area. But the murder of the Political Officer of Najaf, Captain W. M. Marshall, made it necessary to take action against that town. It was found to be the centre of an active enemy intrigue designed to hamper us by such murders as this of the Political Officer. The town was therefore blockaded until the delinquents were handed over. All law-abiding persons were treated with fairness, and scrupulous care was taken to avoid damage to holy persons and places, but when the instigators of the crime were handed over they were tried, sentenced, and exe-

[1] One of the original brigadiers of the Indian Corps in France, he had succeeded General Marshall in command of the IIIrd Corps.

cuted, with the result that subsequently the area was quiet and orderly.

In order to make the line of communications with Persia more secure, General Marshall considered it advisable to drive the Turks out of the Qara Tepe-Kifri-Tuz Khurmatli area and to hold both Kifri and Tuz for the future. General Egerton was therefore directed again to advance in this direction towards the end of April. He succeeded in achieving his objects. Kifri was occupied unopposed on April 28th. Qara Tepe was abandoned by the Turks. The main position of the Turks at Aq Su was attacked on the 29th. The enemy offered a stout resistance, but the British infantry advanced under heavy artillery and machine-gun fire with the greatest rapidity and in the most perfect order. By 7 a.m. the position was carried and Lancashire men of the 13th Division, pressing on in pursuit, entered Tuz Khurmatli, capturing the major portion of the Turkish forces. Our principal object had thus been gained, but General Marshall determined to exploit our advantage still further and on May 7th Kirkuk was occupied.

In Western Persia at this time not only was there a state of famine but there was every prospect of a state of anarchy as well. General Marshall was constantly receiving urgent calls for help. The Persians had suffered greatly from both Turks and Russians, and naturally did not want yet another belligerent to enter their country. Yet they sorely needed help for famine and preservation against disorder. It was necessary also for the British to be on their guard against a Germano-Turkish advance through Persia towards Central Asia—towards Turkistan and Afghanistan. The Russians had by this time collapsed, and a Bolshevist Government inimical to the British was in power at Petrograd and Moscow. The enemy had therefore no longer to fear any attack from the Caucasus, and, unless the British took action to prevent it, might march straight through Persia to the borders of India.

What effective action the British could take it was not, however, easy to see. From rail-head on the Mesopotamian front to Enzeli on the Caspian is by road nearly 700 miles, and the road west of Hamadan is unmetalled and traverses rocky passes, swift-running streams, and broad alluvial valleys. Bridges had been broken and blown up, so that temporary expedients for crossing would have to be devised,

and one at least of the passes was over 7,000 feet above sea-level. The only possible mode of transport would be by motor-van, but the rocky nature of the ground on many stretches of the road would be terribly destructive of tyres. Much transport would also be required for the supply of petrol, oil, spare parts, ordnance stores, and the many and various articles of equipment necessary for maintaining a force in the field. Nevertheless, so great was the urgency of the situation that, in spite of all these drawbacks, it was decided to send a force, or Mission as it was called, under General Dunsterville from Mesopotamia to the Caspian. It was a great adventure but was justified in the result.

On June 1st, 1918, General Dunsterville arrived at Kasvin, then occupied by the Russian Colonel Bickerakov's partisans, some 1,200 strong, with weak British detachments. On the 8th of June the Russians and some British, and British light armoured cars, marched towards Enzeli on the Caspian. On their way they attacked and defeated some Persian guerilla troops ; and an attack on the British Consulate and Bank at Resht was defeated by the 4th Hampshires and 1/2nd Gurkhas of the 36th Brigade, which had been detached for the expedition from the 14th Indian Division.

In the meanwhile various changes had been taking place at Baku. In July the Government of Baku was purely Bolshevist and opposed to British intervention. Actions had taken place between the Tartars and Turks on the one side and the Russians and Armenians on the other. But on July 26th a *coup d'état* was effected, the Bolshevist Government being overthrown and its place taken by a Centro-Caspian Dictatorship which at once appealed for British aid. The Turks now had a fine opportunity of seizing the town, but they were slow to take advantage of it, and, though it was impossible to land British troops in any number, a small mission of British officers with one platoon as escort was dispatched to report on the situation. They landed in Baku on August 4th, receiving an enthusiastic ovation, the townspeople were greatly cheered, and a Turkish attack on the following day was beaten off with heavy losses.

Further British reinforcements[1] were sent during the

[1] These consisted of a weak brigade of the 13th Division, so that 'New Army' battalions of the Royal Warwickshires, Worcestershires, and North Staffordshires

remainder of August, though these were necessarily few in numbers owing to the great length and difficulty of the line of communications from Mesopotamia through Persia. On arrival they took over portions of the defended perimeter of the town, and General Dunsterville made every effort to create order out of chaos. The inhabitants, however, seemed to think that now the British had arrived there was no longer any necessity to fight, and they gave little assistance. On August 26th the Turks attacked with considerable determination a prominent salient held by a British company, and supported by artillery charged home with the bayonet. The British were outnumbered, and not being supported by the townspeople had to withdraw. Further attacks were made during September by the Turks now largely reinforced, and the enemy were able to occupy positions which put the town at their mercy and enabled them to shell the shipping in the port at ranges of from three to five thousand yards. It was decided, therefore, to evacuate the British detachment; and with all the sick and wounded they embarked during the night of September 14th and arrived safely at Enzeli. The withdrawal was unfortunate, but British intervention had to this extent been successful that it had for a period of six weeks kept the enemy out of Baku and its very valuable oil-fields, had caused heavy casualties to the Turks, and had compelled them to bring up considerable reinforcements. The enemy had lost the opportunity of connecting up with Central Asia and India, for during the interval of delay which British intervention in Baku had caused, events in Syria and France were occurring which compelled the Turks to concentrate their efforts nearer home.

The overwhelming victories of General Allenby in Palestine and Syria now greatly affected the situation on the Turco-Persian frontier. The Turkish threat against Kasvin and Tehran was no longer to be feared, and the Turks were indeed hurriedly withdrawing their troops from the Caucasus. The moment was therefore propitious for a British move against the Turkish 6th Army covering the approaches to Mosul, and on October 7th General Marshall received orders to undertake this operation.

had the extraordinary experience of seeing active service on the shores of the Caspian.

'The bulk of the Turkish forces (calculated at about 9,000 rifles and 59 guns) was located on the Tigris and holding a position of great natural strength astride the Al Fat-ha Gorge. This position had been in their occupation nearly eighteen months, and had been thoroughly prepared for a protracted defence.' On the left bank of the Tigris the position extended for some 5 miles along the crest of the Jabal Hamrin, and opposite the junction of the Little Zab with the Tigris the Turks had constructed a second strong position.

General Marshall would have normally hesitated to attack such a position and would have attempted a turning movement via Kirkuk, but he was short of transport through having to support the force on the Caspian and to collect the harvest. He could not therefore move his troops very far from rail-head, and he had no alternative to a direct attack up the Tigris.

The main operations on the Tigris were entrusted to Lieutenant-General Sir Alexander Cobbe, commanding the Ist Army Corps,[1] and in addition the 7th and 11th Cavalry Brigades were placed at his disposal. 'The plan adopted was to turn the left of the Turkish position on the Tigris and force a crossing of the Little Zab, thus getting their right-bank positions in enfilade, and so enabling our troops on that bank to attack with greater chances of success. Having cleared the left bank of the enemy, it was then intended to cut his line of retreat on Mosul by means of cavalry working up the left bank and by light armoured motor-cars moving round the enemy's right.'

On the right bank of the Tigris was the 17th Division under Major-General W. S. Leslie, and on the left bank the 18th Division under Major-General H. D. Fanshawe. Neither of these divisions had so far been in action as a division, but the units of which they were composed had nearly all seen fighting. They contained, however, a good many recruits who had had no previous war experience. One company had been taken away from each of the Indian battalions earlier in the year for the purpose of forming newly raised battalions to replace white troops in the Palestine force. Each infantry brigade, moreover, had recently been reduced by one Indian battalion withdrawn for service at Salonika, and a serious outbreak of influenza also greatly weakened the fighting strength of all units.

[1] This now consisted of the 17th and 18th Indian Divisions.

By the morning of the 23rd of October General Cobbe had completed all his preliminary moves, and was in touch with the enemy both on the right and left banks of the Tigris. That afternoon a column under Brigadier-General Nightingale moved along the crest of the Jabal Hamrin against the Turkish left, whilst the 7th Cavalry Brigade moved round the north of those hills. The vigorous action of these two columns during the night caused the Turks to abandon the very strong Fatha position before daylight on the 24th. That same afternoon the 11th Cavalry Brigade, after a 45 mile ride through a waterless country, reached the Little Zab some 20 miles above its confluence with the Tigris. The Turks were holding the right bank in some strength, but in spite of opposition a crossing was forced; and the 17th and 18th Divisions at the same time followed up the retreating Turks, while the Royal Air Force co-operated with low-flying aeroplanes which bombed and machine-gunned the enemy columns.

On the 25th the 7th Cavalry Brigade and the leading (53rd) infantry brigade of the 18th Division forced a crossing of the Little Zab, near its junction with the Tigris. Meanwhile the 17th Division on the right bank was keeping in close touch with the Turks, but was meeting with great difficulties, and its advance was necessarily slow. The few tracks existing over the deep ravines and precipitous slopes were mere goat-paths, and all transport had to be converted from wheeled to pack. Hence the difficulties of getting forward the field and heavy artillery in time to support the infantry were immense, while the heat and lack of water entailed great exertions for the troops. The division, however, worked steadily forward.

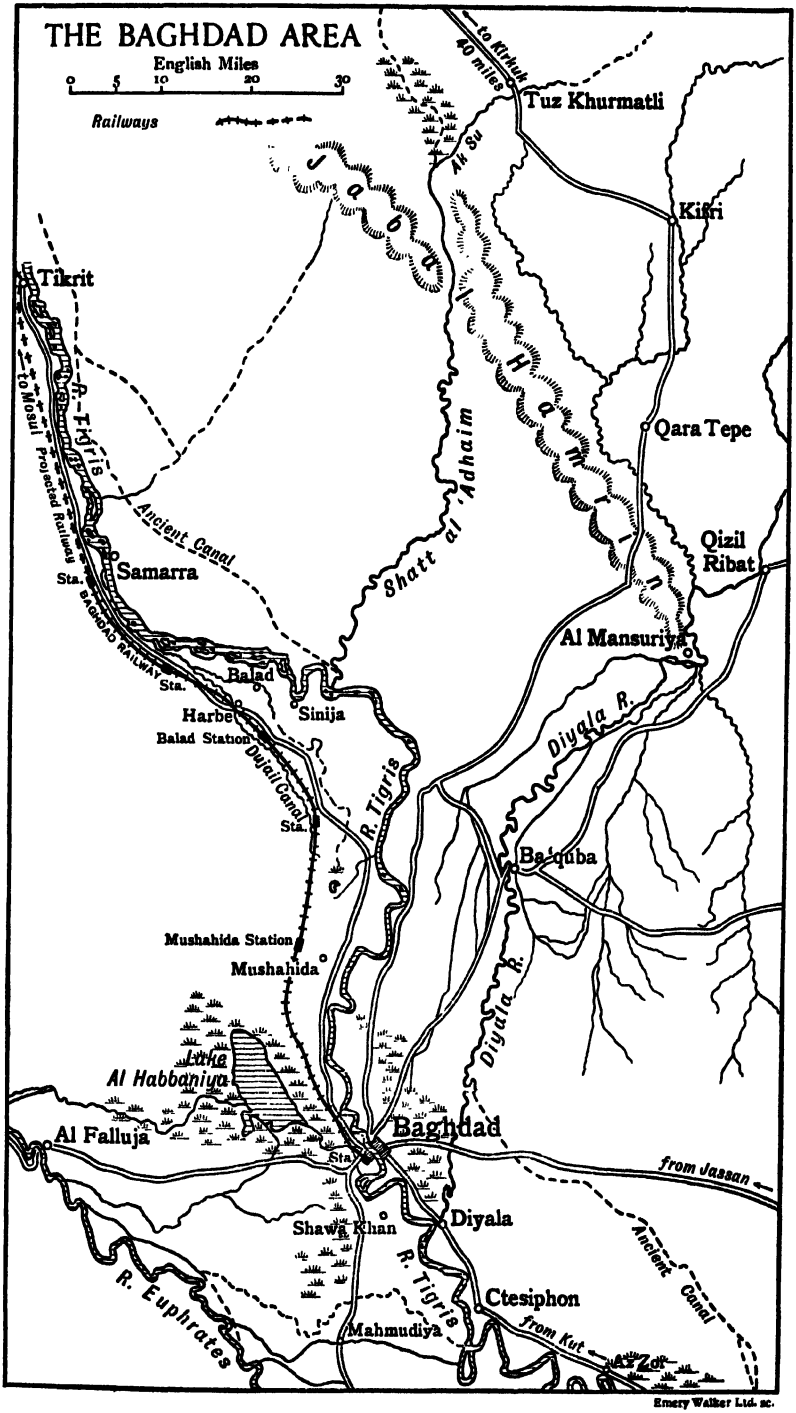
On the 26th of October the 11th Cavalry Brigade (consisting of the 7th Hussars, Guides Cavalry, 23rd Cavalry, and 'W' Battery, R.H.A.) moving forward succeeded in taking up a strong position which blocked the road to Mosul. At the same time the light armoured motor-cars, moving round the right rear of the enemy, cut the telegraph line to Mosul, thus isolating the Tigris force from the 6th Turkish Army Headquarters.

On the 27th the 11th Cavalry Brigade launched an attack against the Turkish reserves with the double object of assisting the 17th Division and concealing its own weakness. Meanwhile the 17th Division throughout the day continued to

advance through extremely difficult country, maintaining a continuous pressure on the Turks in order to prevent them from putting all their weight against the 11th Cavalry Brigade. At 3 a.m. on October 28th the 17th Division continued its march over a broken, arid, and waterless country, and some eight hours later closed with the Turkish rear-guard at Qal'a Sharqat. The enemy's rearmost line of trenches was captured, but the men and animals were so exhausted owing to the heat, lack of water, and their previous exertions that they were in no state to pursue. During the day Turkish reserves, some 2,500 strong, with several batteries of artillery, made repeated attempts from the south to break through the 11th Cavalry Brigade who barred the way to Mosul, but their attacks were unsuccessful. During the afternoon reinforcements from the 53rd Infantry Brigade began to arrive, and at 6.30 p.m. the 7th Cavalry Brigade (13th Hussars, 13th and 14th Lancers (Indian), and 'V' Battery, R.H.A.), after a march of seventeen hours, in which they covered 43 miles, joined the 11th Cavalry Brigade on the right bank.

The enemy were now hemmed in between the 17th Division and the two cavalry brigades. On the other hand 'the troops were urgently in need of rest; the 17th Division had been marching and fighting for the preceding four days under most arduous conditions; the 11th Cavalry Brigade had been continuously in action for seventy-two hours, and all had made very long marches. Nevertheless, it was imperative to call on the troops for renewed exertions in order to close in the enemy and force his surrender.' 'In spite of exhaustion, darkness, and abominable roads, the troops of the 17th Division responded magnificently to the call made upon them, and by 11 a.m. on the 29th had driven back the Turkish rear-guard on to the main body which was holding a position north of Sharqat.'

This position, which consisted of successive lines of hasty entrenchments commanding a series of ravines, was attacked by the British in the face of a galling fire. The enemy delivered a counter-attack which penetrated some distance into our lines before it was stopped and dispersed, and the Turks fought very stubbornly far into the night. But 'gripped as in a vice, with his men packed in ravines which were raked by our guns from across the Tigris, Ismail Hakki, the Turkish Commander, found himself in a hopeless position. All attempts to break

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through had failed', no relief was in sight, and communication with his Commander-in-Chief had been rendered impossible. So 'at dawn on October 30th, just as our troops were about to renew the attack, white flags appeared all along the Turkish lines, and later on Ismail Hakki surrendered in person.'

'Immediately after the surrender the 7th Cavalry Brigade and light armoured cars were ordered to push rapidly along the Mosul road.' They were afterwards joined by the 11th Cavalry Brigade and 54th Infantry Brigade, the whole forming a force with which General Marshall intended to strike at Mosul itself, the chief town of the vilayet of that name and the head-quarters of the 6th Turkish Army. On November 1st, when news of the armistice with Turkey was received, both cavalry brigades had reached a point only 12 miles south of Mosul, where they were met by a Turkish official with a flag of truce. But as General Marshall had reason to fear for the safety of the Christian inhabitants of Mosul, he ordered the cavalry to move to that place as a deterrent to disorder.

Thus were concluded the campaigns in Mesopotamia which had lasted just four years, for it was on November 6th, 1914, that Fao Fort was captured. During that time 114,000 square miles of the Turkish Empire had been conquered and occupied, while 45,500 prisoners and 250 guns, together with vast quantities of war material of all descriptions, had been captured. These results had been achieved 'in a country destitute of shade in summer and impassable from floods in wet weather'. The military effort to achieve this success was stupendous, but the effect of that effort had been to save India from attack and to aid in that breaking-up of the Turks which was so important an element in and so marked a sign of the crumpling up of the whole Germanic alliance.

The campaigns in Mesopotamia were in a very special sense an Indian contribution to the defeat of the Central Powers. The Indian contingent in France in the beginning of the war did work of incalculable value at a supreme crisis; the Indianization of the Egyptian Field Force at another moment of crisis was another service of essential importance. But if in the last stages of the war the proportion of Indian troops in the Palestine theatre of war may have equalled or even slightly

exceeded the ratio in Mesopotamia,[1] it was only for a very short time that India bore the brunt of the Palestine operations, whereas from start to finish the Mesopotamian campaigns were mainly fought by the Indian Army, were largely administered and supplied from India, and were closely connected politically and economically with India. It was the theatre of war which was nearest to India, which affected India most directly and closely. It was to Indian hospitals that sick and wounded were taken from Mesopotamia, to India that officers and men went for leave from Mesopotamia ; it was India that supplied three-quarters of the combatants who fought in Mesopotamia and most of the imported labour. More units of the Indian Army saw service in Mesopotamia than in any other theatre of war: nearly a hundred of its battalions were there at one time and another, and almost as many cavalry units as served in France or Palestine. If the military organization and the administrative system of India were severely strained by the demands made on them for Mesopotamia, the campaigns afforded the Indian Army ample opportunities for the display of its finest qualities of devotion, self-sacrifice, courage, and resource, and for adding to its records many incidents which notably enrich and enhance its finest achievements of earlier days.[2]

[1] There was one non-Indian infantry division in Palestine out of a total of seven, one out of four in Mesopotamia, but the cavalry and lines-of-communication troops in Mesopotamia were almost entirely Indian, which was not the case in Palestine.

[2] This chapter has mainly been taken from the official dispatches.

# CHAPTER IX

## EAST AFRICA

WHEN the war broke out, the Germans were fortunate in possessing in East Africa a commander of exceptional ability, resourcefulness, and strength of character. General von Lettow Vorbeck had arrived in German East Africa in January 1914. He was aware of the possibility of a great war. He was aware, too, that the fate of the German colonies would be decided in Europe and not in the colonies themselves. He recognized also that the forces at his disposal were so small that they could play only a very subordinate part in any European war. But, small as they were, he conceived that, if skilfully handled, they might detain a very much larger number of enemy forces. He therefore set himself to organize and train troops for that purpose, minded to keep his forces collected for an attack on the frontier between German and British East Africa. Parallel to that frontier, and for much of its length at no great distance from it, runs the Uganda railway. If he could threaten that railway he would cause a considerable body of troops to be employed for its protection.

His first journey of reconnaissance and inspection had this object in view. In January 1914—that is immediately after his arrival—he went by sea from Dar es Salaam to Tanga and thence to the country round the Kilimanjaro mountain. Here he found volunteer rifle corps being formed, which in a short time would probably include all the Germans in the territory capable of bearing arms.

At the beginning of the war a number of Germans were present at Dar es Salaam, preparing for an exhibition and for the ceremonial opening of the railway which had just been completed from the port to Lake Tanganyika. The protective force consisted at the time, according to von Lettow, of 216 Europeans and 2,540 Askari. In addition there was a police force of 45 Europeans and 2,154 Askari. The total numbers enrolled during the war were about 3,000 Europeans and 11,000 Askari, including non-combatants.[1]

[1] Slightly different figures have been given in vol. iv, p. 154.

When war began, the only Regular forces in the British East Africa Protectorate and in Uganda were two battalions of the King's African Rifles.[1] The garrison was barely sufficient for defensive purposes and was really intended for internal police work and nothing more, to guard against native uprising and tribal feuds. For defence against a German attack, still more for an offensive against German East Africa, troops from overseas were required, and in the initial stages of the war they came exclusively from India. Mombasa itself might easily have fallen into von Lettow's hands if a contingent of troops from India, under Brigadier-General J. M. Stewart, had not arrived just in time to prevent the town being seized by a German force, which was working up along the coast. Stewart's troops were about 2,000 in number, and consisted of the 29th Punjabis together with the Rampur Imperial Service Infantry.

The first detachment left India on August 19th—it was the first of all India's contingents—and reached Mombasa on September 1st; three days later the 29th Punjabis fired India's first shots in the war in a sharp encounter near Tsavo Bridge on the Uganda railway, driving back a strong raiding party of Germans.

Holding the view that he could best protect German East Africa by threatening us in our own territory, von Lettow would himself have liked to attack the Uganda railway from Kilimanjaro. But the governor, Dr. Schnee, would not agree, and the German forces were concentrated a day's march out of Dar es Salaam. An attack on Taveta was, however, made by Major Kraut, and this place, which lies south-east of Kilimanjaro, just within the British frontier, was lightly held and easily captured by the Germans on August 15th.

Early in September von Lettow moved his head-quarters to Korogwe on the northern railway, that is the railway from Tanga to Kilimanjaro. He was expecting a British landing at Tanga, but he still had in mind an attack on the Uganda railway, so he proceeded to Taveta and from there conducted a series of minor operations directed towards acquiring information about the country. At the end of October, however, he received news of an impending British attack upon Tanga. He accordingly proceeded there and on the

[1] See vol. i, p. 263. See also vol. iv, pp. 225, 275.

2nd of November was informed that two British cruisers and fourteen transports had appeared off the town.

The decision to add a new offensive campaign in East Africa to existing commitments was hardly in consonance with sound strategy and not altogether called for by local conditions. Moreover, the sending of an Expeditionary Force from India to East Africa was not to the liking of the Government of India, who looked to the Persian Gulf as a more useful destination than East Africa for such troops as India could still spare to cross the seas, and did not recognize any special concern of India in East Africa. On the other hand, assuming that high policy dictated pressure on the Germans at all points, pressure in East Africa could undoubtedly be most easily applied from India, and there was beyond question a traditional connexion between India and the eastern side of Africa, where East Indians were numerous and where before the 'Scramble for Africa' the Government of India or the Government of Bombay had been the medium of British dealings with East Africa. In any case, Stewart's Indian contingent having saved Mombasa, it was now decided, with India's help, to take the offensive and attack the Germans. Our plans were to attack them at Longido (north-west of Kilimanjaro) and at Tanga on the coast. We should then, we expected, be able to push our way inland along the railway and force them to evacuate the Usambara plateau. Major-General Aitken, with 6,000 troops sent direct from India, was entrusted with the attack on Tanga, left Bombay on October 16th, and arrived at Tanga on the 2nd of November. A summons to the Germans to surrender was refused, and two days later, the enemy having been given a breathing space of great value for bringing up reinforcements, General Aitken landed a portion of his troops at the south end of the bay. They had to advance on Tanga through dense bush. On the right the 2nd Loyal North Lancashires and the Kashmir Imperial Service Infantry fought their way into the town, but a vigorous German counter-stroke, dealt by troops whom von Lettow had just fetched down by rail, drove back the left to the beach, and the right, taken in flank and unsupported, had to conform and fight its way back. There was no other course left than to re-embark and retire to Mombasa, and, inasmuch as, through the breakdown of transport for water, the attack on Longido also failed, the

first offensive against German East Africa completely fell through. It was a very serious setback, and for the time placed the British forces in East Africa entirely on the defensive, while it revived the determination of the Germans throughout their territory to resist and not to surrender.

In April 1915 Brigadier-General Tighe took over command of the British forces in East Africa. For some months past operations had been taking place on Lake Victoria. The Germans early in the war had seized the small port of Karungu and had hoped to occupy the terminus on the lake of the Uganda railway. But with the arrival of reinforcements [1] General Stewart had been able to assume the offensive and seize their base at Bukoba on the west shores of the lake.[2] Uganda was thus secured from any attack by water.

From Nyasaland we had also conducted operations against the Germans, and though they had at first the command of Lake Tanganyika, a body of water 600 miles in length, we succeeded in transporting overland two motor launches of a speed and armament sufficient to outclass the German gunboats; and eventually we acquired command of the lake for ourselves.[3]

Beyond these small local activities no military operations of any importance took place during 1915. The Germans had not sufficient strength to take the offensive in force; and we had so many preoccupations elsewhere that we could not afford to send troops enough to distant East Africa. Thus the year 1915 came to an end without any appreciable change in the situation in East Africa, except that the German colony, completely cut off by sea and thrown upon its own resources, had to watch the gradual strengthening of the British position and to see the weak points at which blows might have been struck secured and made good. In the operations by which this was done, a very large share of the work fell on the Indian troops whom Generals Stewart and Aitken had brought out. These were minor operations, accompanied by not a little in the way of hardships and carried out under unfavourable conditions; they afforded few opportunities for brilliant achievements and they seemed to have accomplished little, but they paved the way to the offensive which was to follow.

[1] The 98th Infantry were among the troops employed in the lake area.

[2] See vol. iv, pp. 158–9, and 230–1.

[3] See vol. iv, pp. 243–7.

Without the assistance of the contingent from India, British East Africa and Uganda would have fared badly.

With the successful conclusion of General Botha's operations against German South-West Africa, considerable South African forces were rendered available for service in East Africa, while on the withdrawal of the Indian Corps from France several good Indian regiments, mainly composed of Frontier and Trans-frontier men, were dispatched to East Africa in time to do notable service in the new campaign. On the 19th of February 1916 General J. C. Smuts arrived at Mombasa to command the British forces in East Africa. General Tighe had already been pushing forward preparations for an attack on the Kilimanjaro area, and this plan General Smuts adopted.

The Germans at that time were in a favourable position. They were still in occupation of Taveta where they had established an entrenched camp with outposts from 13 to 17 miles farther forward. At a point mid-way between Taveta and Mombasa they maintained a garrison of about 500 rifles with the object of raiding our railway communications. In the coastal region they maintained a considerable garrison on the Umba river. Their initial stock of munitions had been supplemented by blockade runners and by guns from the *Königsberg* and other German warships which had been driven into East African harbours by our blockade. General von Lettow by his skill, energy, and resourcefulness had organized and trained a powerful force to oppose General Smuts. He had not obtained any success in attacking the Uganda railway it is true, but he had so threatened us as to cause us to employ the major part of our forces for its defence. On the other hand he was himself well situated for his own defence. For 130 miles from the coast to the neighbourhood of Kilimanjaro German territory was protected by the high ranges of the Usambara and Pare mountains; and the only practical gap in this rampart was a space of about 4 or 5 miles, in which were situated Taveta, Moshi, and Kahe, between the northern end of the Pare mountains and the outlying spurs of Kilimanjaro.

In this gap von Lettow had concentrated his main forces, and through this gap Smuts intended to drive. He sent part of his force, under General Stewart, round the north side of Kilimanjaro to threaten the enemy's rear, and with the bulk

of his troops he moved against Taveta at the mouth of the gap. The Indian units who took part in these operations included a squadron of the 17th Cavalry, the 27th Indian Mountain Battery, the Faridkot (Imperial Service) Sappers and Miners, the 29th Punjabis, 129th Baluchis, and 3rd Kashmir (Imperial Service) Infantry in General Stewart's 1st Division, with the 28th Indian Mountain Battery and the 130th Baluchis, 2nd Kashmiris, and the 61st Pioneers in General Tighe's 2nd Division which was in the main body. The 40th Pathans joined the main body at a rather later stage of the operations; at this time they, together with some Imperial Service Infantry, were operating on the coast, while the 98th Infantry were still with the Lake Detachment, and several other Indian battalions, both Regular and Imperial Service, were defending the line of communications.

The force moving round Kilimanjaro encountered great difficulties due to the density of the tropical forest and the absence of roads; but starting on the 5th of March it eventually, on the 14th of March, joined hands at New Moshi with General Van Deventer who had advanced through the gap. This northern force had met with little armed opposition. The force which advanced through the gap, on the other hand, had encountered opposition of the most serious nature. On the 7th of March General Van Deventer commenced his march to the river Lumi and beyond it to the foot-hills north of Taveta to turn the enemy's position. By the evening of the 8th he had crossed the Lumi and driven the enemy from the foot-hills on to Taveta. At dawn on the 9th Van Deventer sent his mounted troops to cut the road from Taveta to Moshi, and the enemy thereupon evacuated Taveta but proceeded to occupy a strong position in Latema hill to the south-west. Some very difficult fighting here took place, our attacking troops forcing their way on the 11th through dense jungle. In this the 130th Baluchis were heavily engaged, a party making a most gallant charge into the enemy's position. Eventually the enemy withdrew from the ridge towards Kahe and General Van Deventer pushed on towards Moshi which he occupied.

The Germans had now retreated behind the Ruvu river, and General Smuts employed the next few days in improving the road from Taveta to Moshi and in reorganizing transport

and bringing up supplies before making an advance towards Kahe and the Ruvu river. On the 18th of March this advance began. As usual progress was slow through the well-nigh impenetrable bush which surrounded the enemy's position. But Smuts directed Van Deventer to cross the Pangani (Ruvu) river below Kahe and so turn the enemy's position. On the 21st Van Deventer, having crossed the Pangani with some difficulty, occupied in succession Kahe hill and Kahe station. The enemy then blew up the railway bridge over the Pangani (Ruvu) river, but realizing the importance of the Kahe hill made several though unsuccessful attempts to regain it. In the meantime General Sheppard, who had beaten off a determined counter-attack on the night of the 20th/21st, had been ordered to advance along the Masai Kraal–Kahe road to support Van Deventer; but the enemy were in a strong position between two rivers and Sheppard was unable to make any headway. At dawn on the 22nd, however, it was found that, realizing that Van Deventer had turned their position, the Germans had slipped away across the Ruvu river.

Thus the conquest of the Kilimanjaro area, probably the richest and most desirable area of German East Africa, was completed. The enemy had been driven into the Pare mountains and down the Tanga railway. The spirit of the British forces, depressed by their long inactivity, was revived and strengthened, and General Smuts was able in confidence to mature his plans for the further conquest of the country.

But for the moment a pause was necessary. The rainy season had now set in with extreme violence, and it was necessary for Smuts without delay to dispose his forces most advantageously with a view to their health and comfort. The opportunity was also taken to reorganize his forces, keeping the contingents from South Africa together in two divisions under Major-General Van Deventer and Major-General Brits, and forming the East African and Indian troops [1] into another division under Major-General A. R. Hoskins.

Smuts had not merely to defeat the enemy's forces but effectively to occupy the country, and the country was immense. It contained, he wrote, no vital point anywhere, no

[1] The 40th Pathans were now in the 2nd East African Brigade, the two Kashmiri battalions being amalgamated in the 1st Brigade, to which General Sheppard had been transferred, Brigadier-General Hannyngton taking command of the 2nd.

important cities or centres in defence of which the enemy must stand and fight it out to the last. It had practically no roads; the only dominant economical features were the two railways. Various lines of attack were open to him. He might have secured Dar es Salaam and advanced inland from the coast along the central railway, with Dar es Salaam as his base. But he ruled this plan out because of the difficulty of landing and because of the unhealthiness of the coast districts. He decided to push Van Deventer southwards from the Kilimanjaro area straight into the very heart of German East Africa, while the remainder of the British troops, including the Indian units up at the front, were retained on the Ruvu river to watch von Lettow's main forces.

On the 3rd of April Van Deventer began his march south, and after overcoming resistance by small garrisons and patrols occupied Kondoa Irangi on the 19th, thereby placing us in possession of the high healthy and fertile plateau—the Masai steppe—which connects the central railway with the Kilimanjaro area. He occupied a dominant strategic position for any further advance either southward in the direction of the central railway or westward to Tabora or eastward to the Usambara mountains.

For the time, however, no further advance was possible, as the numerous rivers were coming down in flood sweeping away the bridges which our troops had constructed with so much labour, turning the roads into impassable mud tracks, and making transport a physical impossibility. As much as four inches of rain would fall in a single day, and the low-lying parts of the country assumed the appearance of lakes. The line connecting the Uganda railway with the Tanga–Kilimanjaro line had by this time reached Taveta, but Van Deventer's division in the interior was cut off and had to live for weeks on such supplies as could be collected locally.

The enemy soon realized the threat involved in Van Deventer's movement, and transferring troops from the northern to the central railway took steps to meet it. On the 9th of May he attacked Van Deventer with great determination but without success, and with this defeat von Lettow's 'last hope of successful resistance to any large portion of our forces was extinguished'.

Such was the position when in the middle of May the rains

abated, the ground began to harden, and there was a prospect of a general forward movement again becoming possible. This movement had of necessity to be against the enemy in the Pare and Usambara mountains. These had to be cleared before any further advance into the heart of German East Africa would be safe. Smuts's general idea was to move eastward along the mountains to a point opposite Handeni, and then, swinging south, march towards the central railway in a general direction parallel with Van Deventer. In order to forestall the enemy in any attempt which he might make to bring back the force which he had sent to oppose Van Deventer, it was important to move rapidly along the Pare mountains. But the nature of the country was such as to preclude rapidity of movement. The mountains are in huge blocks with fertile valleys. 'The southern slopes are precipitous, and immediately below runs the Tanga railway, while farther south dense bush extends for 15 to 20 miles to the Pangani, an impassable river flowing almost parallel to the railway and the mountains. The enemy held the mountains and the railway and had outposts along the Pangani river.'

Smuts's plan was to send the main column, in which was General Sheppard's brigade with most of the artillery, down the left bank of the Pangani, somewhat in advance of a second smaller column [1] following the railway, while a third column was to enter the Pare mountains from the far side—the eastern side—and passing through a gap join the centre column near Same. In this way, with his flanks well forward in the mountains and on the river, he expected that the enemy's resistance on the railway would be hopeless.

The advance began on the 18th of May when the 3rd King's African Rifles under Colonel Fitzgerald moved in the direction of the gap. On the 22nd of May Brigadier-General Hannyngton's Indian brigade moved along the railway, while Sheppard's and Beves's brigades moved down the Pangani river. The enemy realizing the turning movement evacuated his position, and Hannyngton occupied Same on the 25th and joined Fitzgerald next day. The advance continued. Bwiko was occupied on the 31st May, after a fight at Mikochine in which the 29th Punjabis and 130th Baluchis did effective work.

[1] This was under Brigadier-General Hannyngton and included the 40th Pathans, 129th Baluchis, and 2nd Kashmiris.

The enemy then retired, not on the Usambara mountains and Tanga but in the direction of Handeni, entrenching himself on the right bank of the Pangani river. 'It was then evident that he meant to give up the northern railway and make for the central railway.' Smuts had reached the Usambara in ten days, covering in that time a distance of 130 miles of trackless country along the Pangani and through the mountains. A short pause was now necessary while a bridge over the Pangani was completed.

On the 8th of June the advance was resumed in a southerly direction from the Pangani. There was a sharp fight on June 9th in which the 130th Baluchis suffered severely, but the enemy was forced to retire. A dry belt of 32 miles had now to be crossed, and the enemy were found on the 15th of June to be strongly entrenched at Handeni. By a turning movement to the west his communications were threatened and he was compelled to retire. On the 19th Handeni was occupied by Sheppard's brigade. The pursuit of the enemy continued, and in a fight on the 24th of June on the Lukigura river the Kashmir Infantry especially distinguished themselves, storming a German position at the point of the bayonet.

The eastern slopes of the Nguru block of mountains had now been reached, which the enemy were evidently occupying in considerable strength. Our transport had reached the utmost radius of its capacity. The main column had had to march for about 200 miles along routes prepared by themselves, mostly by cutting through the bush. The troops had been on half rations for some time and badly needed rest and reorganization. 'Several units were reduced to 30 per cent. of their original effectives owing to the ravages of malaria, and the difficulties of evacuating the sick were as great as those of forwarding supplies and reinforcements.' Smuts therefore formed a large standing camp in which to rest and refit the troops preparatory to the next phase of operations.

During this interval the 5th Indian Infantry [1] moved south along the coast towards Tanga. Another force under Colonel Price was landed 8 miles north, and with the Navy co-operating Tanga was occupied practically without opposition on the 7th of July. To assist in these operations and if possible to

[1] This unit, after serving in the Cameroons (cf. vol. iv, pp. 100 note and 103), had been transferred to East Africa.

intercept the retreat of the Germans from Tanga, General Hannyngton was directed to move south-east from Handeni, and his advance assisted to clear a large area of the enemy. He then returned to Lukigura, having incorporated in his brigade the 57th Rifles, who took the place of the 129th Baluchis, too much reduced by malaria to continue in the field without a rest. It must not be forgotten that to men from the Indian frontier the climate of East Africa was quite as unfavourable as to Europeans and the sick-rate of the Indian troops was very high, so much so that battalions were often reduced to little more than the strength of a company.

Operations were also undertaken in the district of Lake Victoria which resulted in the capture on the 14th of July of the important stronghold of Mwanza on the southern shores of the lake. 'The rapidity with which the enemy abandoned his valuable Lake Provinces and Mwanza was a clear indication that the eventual retreat would not be towards Tabora, but farther east towards Dar es Salaam, or south towards Mahenge.'

Van Deventer had also again become active. On the 24th of June he attacked the enemy's positions all along the line round Kondoa Irangi, and succeeded in occupying them with comparatively small loss. Following up this attack he sent a column direct to the central railway and 'by the end of July a hundred miles of the central railway was thus in our possession. Practically every bridge or culvert was found blown up, but our advance had been so rapid that the enemy had had no time for further destruction of the track.'

A Belgian force had by this time crossed Lake Tanganyika and occupied Ujiji and Kigoma, the lake terminus of the central railway; while in the south-west General Northey's force, moving up from Rhodesia, had occupied Malangali and was prepared to move on Iringa.

The time had now come for a further advance of Smuts's main force, which had been halted opposite the Nguru mountains. The general's plan was to advance by way of the mountains and clear them as he advanced, so that the force in them might not remain as a threat to his line of communications. This he meant to do by wide turning movements through the mountains which would have the effect of threatening or cutting the enemy's communications. The enemy were

strongly entrenched in the mountains along the Mjonga river. On the 5th of August the advance began. General Enslin with the 2nd Mounted Brigade, followed on the 6th by Beves's South African Brigade, marched toward the west flank of the mountains; and on the 7th General Sheppard moved out from Msiha camp upon the eastern flank, his part being to make a holding attack on the main position. General Hannyngton's brigade was with the central column which moved down the Mjonga valley. On the 8th Enslin, moving through a gap, occupied Mhonda well in rear of the enemy's position. The enemy, who was being pressed in front by Hannyngton and threatened on the east by Sheppard, was thereby forced to abandon his defence in the mountains and retire as fast as he could. Sheppard moving on the east occupied Kipera on the 13th. Smuts's further movements after the enemy were greatly hampered by numerous rivers the bridges across which had been destroyed. On the 18th of August he crossed the Wami river near Dakawa, after a sharp fight, in which the 130th Baluchis were in the main attack from the north, while the 29th Punjabis and 2nd Kashmiris struck in from the north-east to threaten the German right flank and rear. The action resulted in the retreat of the Germans, and then a halt ensued while a suitable bridge was being constructed over the river.

While these operations were taking place Van Deventer was also moving eastward. On the 9th of August he advanced over a waterless area and engaged the enemy. Day by day he drove him back along the railway from west to east, and on the 22nd of August occupied Kilosa the day before Smuts resumed his advance from the Wami. Van Deventer in this progress had overcome many difficulties, for the railway followed for 25 miles a narrow defile cut through the mountains by a river. Every yard of advance was contested by the enemy, who received our advance-guard with one or several ambushes and then fell back on a well-prepared position. Owing to bad roads, shortage of transport, and the rapidity of advance, the adequate rationing of the troops was not possible. In consequence of this underfeeding and overworking the men suffered sadly in health, and practically all the animals were infected by fly.

The Germans were now retiring on Morogoro, and Smuts's aim was to bring them to bay there if possible. To this end

Enslin, who had reached the central railway on the 23rd of August, was ordered still farther south, and he occupied Mlali on the 24th of August. It was hoped to bottle up the enemy in Morogoro by making a turning movement on the east to correspond with this movement of Enslin's on the west, but Smuts was unaware that there was a route through the mountains to the south of Morogoro by which the enemy might effect a retreat. The capture of the ends of the mountain was of no avail. There was an outlet through the middle.

Smuts crossed the river Wami on the 23rd of August and made a cunningly devised movement first north-east and then south-east to get to the eastern end of the mountains behind Morogoro. Owing to the nature of the country and the bush, the absence of water, and heat, the two days' march 'proved one of the most trying of the whole campaign'. At the end he was 18 miles north-east of Morogoro, and his presence there must have been a complete surprise to the enemy, who had massed his forces on the west side to oppose Enslin. Owing to the exhaustion of man and beast Smuts was unable to move on the 25th, but on the 26th the march was resumed, one portion of his force being directed on Morogoro itself and another on the eastern flank of the mountains in rear. It seemed that at last von Lettow would be surrounded and brought to bay. But when Morogoro was reached the enemy was gone. His flight had been precipitate, and many proofs were found of his demoralized condition. But of the main fact that he had escaped there was no doubt.

Despite that men and animals were worn out with the exertions of the last three weeks, Smuts decided to continue the pursuit. Unfortunately the country through which he had to move was very well suited for rear-guard actions by which the enemy might hold up the pursuit. The track along the eastern slopes of the mountains passed 'through very difficult broken foot-hills, covered either with bush or grass growing from 6 to 12 feet high, through which any progress was slow, painful, and dangerous. The bridging of the Ruvu took several days, and for some distance beyond the road passed along the face of precipitous rocks, round which the enemy had constructed a gallery on piles.' As the gallery would not carry our mechanical transport, some days were occupied in blasting away the mountain side and constructing a proper road. The nature of the country beyond and the continued

fighting made progress slow, ' while road-making and bridging behind engaged the attention, not only of the pioneers, but of a large portion of the troops as well.' Several weeks were occupied in cutting a road through a spur which ends in a precipitous face towards the south. Tulo was occupied by Hannyngton's brigade on the 10th of September. The enemy made a resolute stand for several days near Dunthumi, but the 57th Rifles secured a hill which was the key of the position, the 27th Mountain Battery did fine work, covering the advance of the 3rd Kashmiris down the main road, and in the end the Germans were driven south to the Mgeta river on the 13th of September.

While these movements were being made on the east of the Uluguru mountains, Enslin was working round on the west, following the enemy through the mountains and driving them from position after position. From the amount of heavy gun ammunition which was abandoned, it was clear that a long and elaborate defence of these mountains had been intended. But the unexpected arrival of Enslin and 'the audacious and successful pursuit into the mountains', combined with the operations on the eastern flank, had forced the enemy to abandon his plans and retreat towards Kisaki. Here he made a stand and drove off attacks on the 7th and 8th of September. It was only on the 15th of September, when the movement on the east flank had made itself felt and his retreat was threatened, that he was compelled to evacuate Kisaki. He had now been driven everywhere from the mountains and had taken up a defensive line along the Mgeta river south of Dunthumi and farther west astride the road from Kisaki to the Rufiji. Smuts did not now press his attack on the line. His men were exhausted with ceaseless fighting and marching, and a thorough rest was imperatively necessary.

Simultaneously with these movements against von Lettow movements along the coast had also taken place. In the middle of August General Edwards assembled a force of about 1,800 rifles under Colonel Price for the seizure of Dar es Salaam. One column moved from Bagamoyo, a port which the Navy had occupied on the 15th of August, southward towards the central railway to seize the bridge across the Ruvu [1] before the enemy could destroy it. The other column was to

[1] There were two rivers called Ruvu, one the Upper Pangani, the other the river here mentioned. See vol. iv, p. 165 note.

move along the coast. Both were to converge on Dar es Salaam. Neither column met with any serious opposition. The enemy was aware of our overwhelming force and was 'anxious to avoid siege operations against a town containing a large German non-combatant population'. The Germans decided therefore not to defend the place, and everywhere fell back before our advance. But the Ruvu bridge was completely destroyed.

The two columns advanced on Dar es Salaam. At the same time two British ships of war appeared before that place. On the 3rd of September it surrendered, and on the 4th was occupied by our troops. One 6-inch gun was blown up, while the rest of the artillery had been taken away south by the enemy. The railway station and harbour works had been effectively destroyed. Three ships had been sunk beyond any hope of being salved. A fourth was sunk but subsequently salved by us.

General Smuts now thought the time had come for effectively occupying the whole of the coast. He accordingly made arrangements with the admiral, Admiral Charlton, for convoying troops south and co-operating in the seizure of all important points. Kilwa, Lindi, Sudi Bay, and other ports were all occupied before the end of September, and at Kilwa a strong force was landed for operations which it was proposed to conduct against the enemy from that quarter. 'This occupation of the southern coast not only helped to pen the enemy up in the interior, but was intended to prevent any assistance from reaching the enemy from oversea.'

While the coast was being occupied, measures were taken to restore Dar es Salaam harbour and to reconstruct the central railway. The railway track had been largely left undamaged by the Germans, but the bridges had been carefully demolished. 'Between Kilosa and Dar es Salaam alone about sixty bridges, some of very considerable dimensions, had been wrecked. To restore these so as to carry heavy locomotives would take many months.' But the South African Pioneers originated a plan by which the track might be used for light traffic till the bridges could be rebuilt. This plan was 'to restore the bridges with local material so as to carry a weight of about six tons and to narrow the gauge of our heavy motor lorries so that they could run on railway trolley wheels over the line thus restored. A motor tractor with trailer carries ten to

fifteen tons of supplies', and thus considerable use could be made of the railway. By the 6th of October the railway track was open for motor traffic for 300 miles from Dar es Salaam, and it was possible thus to use this port as our sea base. By the end of October it was open for motor traffic to Tabora.

For Tabora had by that date been occupied by allied forces. A British force had advanced southward from Mwanza on Lake Victoria [1] and Belgian forces had advanced both southward parallel with the British and also eastward from Ujiji on Lake Tanganyika. The Belgians occupied Tabora on the 19th of September, while a week later the British struck the central railway a few miles east of that place. The enemy retired in two columns—one eastward along the railway, the other southward. Both columns were making for the Great Ruaha river—as the Rufiji is called in its upper course—with the object of joining the main enemy force which had been retiring before Smuts.

From the south-west we were also pressing in upon the enemy. General Northey, of whom General Smuts wrote as conducting his operations 'with remarkable ability and vigour', had occupied Lupembe on the 19th of August and Iringa on the 29th of August.

In the extreme south a Portuguese force crossed the Ruvuma river and occupied strategic points to the north of it.

From the middle of September until nearly the end of December there was a pause in the main operations, the two sides facing each other on the Mgeta river. There was much to be done in the way of reorganization, re-fitting, and other preparations. For one thing, so large a proportion of the force had contracted malaria that the bulk of the white troops had to be invalided to South Africa, while many of the Indian units were reduced to a very weak state. Some had already been sent back to India, and in their place the 30th and 33rd Punjabis were ordered to East Africa, while the expansion of the King's African Rifles and the employment of a Nigerian brigade filled the gaps left by the withdrawal of the white troops.

At this phase in the campaign the Germans intended to

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hold their position to the north of the Rufiji as long as possible, then to retire to the healthy Mahenge plateau, and if driven from that point to make their way south into Portuguese territory. Smuts's immediate object was to defeat their forces north of the Rufiji and, if they withdrew, to try to cut them off from their base, Mahenge. He proposed to utilize the troops whom he had landed at Kilwa to work into the interior as required, and by attacking from both north and east he hoped to close in on the enemy and prevent his escape to Mahenge. Van Deventer on the north-west of Mahenge and Northey on the south-west were to co-operate in one more effort to capture their very elusive foe.

The force operating from Kilwa was placed under the command of General Hannyngton and consisted of the 2nd Loyal North Lancashires, 40th Pathans, a composite battalion of Indian troops, two battalions 2nd King's African Rifles, and two 5-inch howitzer batteries. This force took up a position in the country round Kilwa in order to cover the improvement of the new base.

But during this period of reconstruction and rearrangement the enemy had not been inactive. He had made many raids on Van Deventer's and Northey's scattered outposts, and now awakening to the danger to his line of retreat which the presence of the Kilwa force indicated, he attacked it. On the 7th of November he made a preliminary assault on an outpost at Kibata but was repulsed, and on the 6th of December again attacked in some force and with guns which could not have been brought up without appreciable labour. The Germans succeeded in occupying hills and caused us considerable trouble, but after sharp fighting, in which the 129th Baluchis made a most gallant and successful counter-attack, they were driven off and eventually in January they withdrew. About the same time a German attack on a force guarding the roads from Dar es Salaam to the Rufiji, with which the 57th Rifles were serving, was also repulsed.

At the end of the year the Portuguese were unfortunately driven back over the Ruvuma, and some guns, machine guns, ammunition, and stores fell into the hands of the enemy. It was evident that the Portuguese would not be able to bar von Lettow's retreat southward when the general advance came to be made.

The engineers and pioneers having improved the roads, and supplies and ammunition having been accumulated, Smuts was now ready to enter on the next phase of his campaign. He formed four columns. Firstly, General Beves's brigade, with the Kashmir Mountain Battery and the Faridkot Sappers and Miners, was to make a wide movement to the westward to Kirengwe, and eventually to a crossing of the Rufiji river well above the crossing at Kibambawe which von Lettow was using. Secondly, General Sheppard with the 1st East African Brigade [1] and four batteries was to march from Dakawa on Wiransi. Thirdly, Brigadier-General Cunliffe with the Nigerian Brigade was to attack the Mgeta position from Nkessa's. Fourthly, Lieutenant-Colonel R. A. Lyall with a battalion from the Nigerian Brigade and the 2nd Kashmir Infantry, detached from Sheppard, was to advance from Tulo southward to Kiruru.

The main operations began on the 1st January 1917, Beves's advanced troops having already occupied Kirengwe. The 130th Baluchis under Lieutenant-Colonel Dyke, who were moving ahead of Sheppard's force to cover the march of Beves's brigade, made for Wiransi and were heavily attacked by three companies of the enemy. The Baluchis drove off four assaults and then proceeded on their way, occupying Wiransi by 11 a.m. Colonel Lyall reached the Mgeta on the previous day and was now making for Chimbe, which he reached that afternoon. General Sheppard captured most of the rear-guard at Dakawa and dispersed the remainder. Cunliffe advanced against the enemy's line on the Mgeta, the enemy very soon retired, and by 1 p.m. we were in possession of the north bank of the Mgeta. Beves's brigade still advanced, and by the evening of the 1st his foremost troops were 10 miles south of Kirengwe.

This was followed by an advance by Sheppard and Lyall against a new German position which had been located about 10 miles north of the Rufiji, while the Nigerians were drawn back to Mgeta and then sent on to reinforce Beves. On the morning of the 4th Sheppard from the south-west and Dyke from the north attacked the enemy at Beho-beho. It had been hoped that we should have been able to cut in behind him, but by 1 p.m. he had again slipped away. It was in this

[1] General Sheppard still had under him the 29th Punjabis, the 130th Baluchis, and the 2nd and 3rd Kashmiris.

fight that Selous, the famous hunter, was killed on his 65th birthday.

Beves meanwhile was steadily moving on to the Rufiji. He had sent on ahead an advance party of scouts and the Faridkot Sappers with four Berthon boats on the night of the 2nd to seize a crossing of the river. This party had already marched 20 miles that day, but they pressed on during the night and at dawn on the 3rd arrived on the Rufiji. They met with no opposition. They got the boats into the water, crossed over, and dug themselves in on the other side. On the morning of the 4th the whole of the Cape Corps were across the river.

On the 5th Sheppard reached Kibambawe, but the enemy had already crossed the river and had destroyed the bridge behind them. The river was here 800 yards wide, and Sheppard could make no move while it was daylight. But at night he got across a double company of the 30th Punjabis[1] and two machine guns unperceived by the enemy and in spite of the hippopotami which attacked the boats. These troops lay hidden during the next day, but in the night more troops were crossed over, and by the morning of the 7th the 30th Punjabis were all over. The enemy were now aware of their presence and attacked, but the Punjabis aided by artillery fire were able to hold their own till nightfall, when more troops were crossed over to their assistance. We were then firmly established on the south bank of the Rufiji river at two points, and Beves's troops had struck across at the enemy's line of retreat so that he was forced to move once more.

Every effort was made by Smuts to join hands with the force advancing from Kilwa and so cut off the enemy's retreat. But it is practically impossible in the African bush, where the range of vision is so limited, to enclose an enemy determined to escape. Von Lettow again managed to elude our force and escape into the mountains.

At this point General Smuts was recalled to represent South Africa in the Imperial Conference, and sailed from Dar es Salaam on the 20th of January. Almost immediately afterwards the rainy season set in and lasted till June. All further moves were impossible, and the enemy was thereby enabled to fall back unmolested to the south.

[1] This battalion had only recently arrived from India.

This retreat to the south it had been found impossible to cut off, for the larger operations which Smuts had planned did not entirely fulfil expectations.[1] As we have already seen, the attacks by the enemy on the Portuguese had forced them over the Ruvuma river. Farther west General Northey had advanced and attempted to surround the forces in his front at Mfrika, but they had succeeded in escaping from him towards Mahenge. They were followed across the Ruhudje river but we were unable completely to cut them off. Van Deventer was to have operated from Iringa, a hundred miles north-west of Mahenge, but owing to heavy rains he had found it impossible to get forward the reserve of supplies, and he was obliged therefore to send the bulk of his troops back to rail-head and retain only three battalions and a squadron of mounted infantry. On the 25th of December he advanced south [2] and on the 26th attacked, but during that night the Germans broke up into small parties and escaped through the bush. There had been heavy rain for some days past. Every nullah was a river. The troops were constantly wading through them breast high. For ten days all mechanical transport had been at a standstill. In these circumstances it was impossible to carry through the operations to a successful issue.

At the end of May 1917 General Van Deventer took over the chief command. He, like Smuts, attempted encircling movements with the object of rounding up the German forces. On the western side Northey and the Belgians were to converge on Mahenge, while columns from Kilwa and Lindi on the coast were to push up from the east. Sheppard's old 1st East African Brigade formed the nucleus of the Lindi Force, while the 33rd Punjabis, 40th Pathans, 55th Rifles, 129th Baluchis, and 22nd and 27th Mountain Batteries were all in the Kilwa force, under General Hannyngton. The enemy's chief depots of ammunition were believed to be formed near the coast, and he might be forced either to fight for this ammunition or else to abandon it. He chose to fight for it, and on the 19th of

[1] Had anticipations been fulfilled it was proposed to withdraw most of the Indian troops to Egypt, while for a time it was contemplated sending them to Aden to undertake more active operations against the Turks in the Yemen than had hitherto been possible. But as von Lettow had escaped capture, the Indian contingent had to remain in East Africa and even to be slightly increased.

[2] India was represented in his force by the 17th Infantry and part of the 28th Mountain Battery.

July at Narungombe, south-west of Kilwa, a very stubborn combat took place. In this the 33rd Punjabis, though so reduced as only to form one machine-gun company, did invaluable work, and the 40th Pathans, though they suffered severely in a German counter-attack, made a very effective attempt to outflank the German right. It was perhaps about the hardest fight of the whole campaign, and certainly caused the Germans to retire somewhat hurriedly. They fell back upon Nahungu, which we did not capture till the 28th of September.

The interval had as usual been spent in reorganizing, in making preparations especially as regards transport arrangements for the next advance, and in reconnoitring, a very necessary process in a practically unknown country where such maps as existed were far from accurate. The plan of this next move was to be an advance from the north against the enemy by two columns based on Kilwa, while the Lindi force pushed south-west up the Lukuledi river to intercept his retreat to the Ruvuma and the Portuguese frontier. The move began on September 19th; there was sharp fighting on the Mbemkuru river on the 26th and 27th, followed by the passage of the river on October 1st, and more fighting in which the 22nd Mountain Battery was very heavily engaged, as was also the remnant of the 129th Baluchis. About this period the 25th Cavalry made a most successful raid higher up the Mbemkuru, destroying large depots of food which the enemy had collected and contributing thereby greatly to diminution of his freedom of movement.

Further severe fighting took place between the Mbemkuru and Lukuledi rivers. The force from Kilwa was now to the westward of von Lettow, and was between him and the force under Colonel Tafel which had been holding out in the Mahenge area and was trying to rejoin the main body. The position occupied by the Kilwa columns proved important later on, though the attempts to catch von Lettow between them and the Lindi column just failed after some more fighting in which the 55th Rifles did good service and the ever-enduring 129th Baluchis took a strong position on Chiwata hill. There were four days of stubborn fighting in difficult country, the water problem was as acute as ever, and together with transport troubles delayed the progress of the enveloping movements.

While von Lettow had been displaying courage in fighting and skill in eluding the forces operating to capture him, his lieutenant in the west—Colonel Tafel—had fared less favourably. With a force of 2,000 rifles he had been covering Mahenge. But he was attacked by the Belgians and driven from his defences, and Mahenge and the stores and munitions so vitally important to the Germans, now on their last resources, fell into the hands of the Belgians. Tafel skilfully evaded the British forces designed to cut off his retreat and marched across country from Mahenge in a south-westerly direction, hoping, as arranged between them, to join hands with his chief, von Lettow, near the Portuguese border at Newala. But when he arrived on the Bangala river, some distance west of Newala, with about 1,400 men, he found no signs of von Lettow. He found himself on the contrary in the vicinity of a British force, the Kilwa columns. He made a move towards Newala in an attempt to join up with von Lettow, but was checked on the 26th of November by the 129th Baluchis. They were under 200 strong and much outnumbered by Tafel's force, but they put up a most determined fight which had the effect of convincing Tafel that the game was up. Believing himself abandoned by von Lettow and incapable of contending against the British forces who were now drawn round him, he surrendered with all his men on the 28th of November.

But had Tafel reached Newala he would not have found von Lettow there. Hard pressed on both flanks, he had kept his luck to the end, and when the 55th Rifles on November 21st occupied Newala it was to find that von Lettow had passed through twenty-four hours earlier and was on his way to the Ruvuma. But he had made his last stand. Nearly 1,500 of his force were surrounded and laid down their arms. Thereafter he was merely a fugitive.

Yet, if he was only a fugitive, he could cause an infinity of trouble. He still had with him 320 Europeans and 2,500 Askari. Van Deventer had planned to prevent his crossing the Ruvuma, and a Portuguese force of 900 men was meant to watch the crossing. Unfortunately they allowed von Lettow to cross unhindered, and the German general not only crossed the river but attacked the Portuguese and captured their arms and ammunition. Thereby he acquired a new lease of fighting life, and marching rapidly southward on Fort Nanguari, the

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depot and post commanding the chief pass on the road from Mozambique to the lakes, he captured that also and with it a further haul of supplies and ammunition. The Portuguese became in fact not a source of danger but a source of supply to him.

To follow him now was hopeless. The rainy season had again set in, and pursuit had to be abandoned for the time being. But Van Deventer had by no means given it up entirely. He utilized Lake Nyasa for transporting troops southward. With these he moved into Portuguese territory from the southern end of the lake, surprised von Lettow, and drove him northward again. It would be tedious to follow von Lettow in all his turnings and twistings, first in Portuguese territory, then in German East Africa, and finally in Rhodesia. He was never able to make a stand ; it was not of course his object. His object was to maintain his force intact and keep us employing considerable forces as long as the war lasted. When he crossed into Portuguese territory the conquest of German East Africa was at an end. To run him down was now for the most part a problem of transport, and did not call for the services of any very large force. The King's African Rifles were quite equal to doing all that was needed, and it was decided not to employ any Indian Army units in the further operations against him. Accordingly they were drawn back gradually to the coast, and in the early months of 1918 returned one by one to India. The 130th Baluchis had already left in October 1917, and by April 1918 practically all the Indian troops were home.

In the autumn of 1918 von Lettow appeared before Abercorn in Rhodesia, but his attack on the two companies which were entrenched there failed. On the 8th of November he arrived at Kasama, and when the Armistice was signed on the 11th of November 1918 he was out on the veldt.

On the 25th of November he formally surrendered at Abercorn. There were then with him 155 Europeans and 1,168 natives. He had certainly succeeded in his original object of holding up much superior numbers of his country's enemies. For four years in a depressing tropical climate and with everything against him he had fought with skill, courage, and resource, and—most notable feature of all—had under these circumstances been able to keep his native soldiers attached

to him to the very end. All that a soldier could be and do he had been and done. But, in spite of all this, the Germans had lost the colony in which they took the greatest pride, and to this result, so satisfactory to us, India had made a special contribution. If South Africa had contributed largely to the successful assumption of the offensive in 1916, and if West Africa and the locally raised King's African Rifles had borne an ever-increasing share in the burden in 1917, it was on the Indian Army that the bulk of the defensive work had fallen in 1914 and 1915. Indian units had taken a large part in the campaign of 1916, and some of the units which had helped to drive the Germans back from Kilimanjaro had been not perhaps in at the death but in the penultimate stage of the hunt, the expulsion of von Lettow from his colony. Including Imperial Service Troops over thirty fighting Indian units served in East Africa, their losses in action had been heavy, their losses from sickness heavier, their invaliding rate very high. Yet though reduced to skeletons by fever and dysentery they had struggled bravely on. Moreover, not only had India sent troops but also almost the whole of the transport and supplies for the British force. German East Africa is therefore to a peculiar degree associated with India when we consider the part which India took in the war.[1]

[1] This chapter has mainly been taken from the official dispatches.

# CHAPTER X

## CONCLUSION

On November 11th, 1918, the Armistice was signed. The war was over. The victory was won. And to that victory India had made no mean contribution. At the signing of the Armistice India was represented in France by only artillery and A,S.C. drivers and by Indian Coolie Corps. But in Palestine and Mesopotamia Indian troops were in force; if they had been withdrawn from East Africa, they were beginning to arrive at Salonika, where they had not as yet served; and they supplied the bulk of the force employed in the new theatre of operations in North Persia. The effort which India had put forth, if compared with what Germany, France, or Great Britain had made, and if compared with the numbers of her population, might not excite astonishment. Out of a population which at the time of the war must have amounted to 320 millions, India put hardly one million into the field; and her contribution in munitions would be slighter still in comparison. Still, for India it was magnificent. India was not fighting for her very life as France, England, and Germany were. Nor could she feel the war as acutely as those closer to the scene of action; she was thousands of miles away, and for some time at least was actually benefiting in a material way from the war; large sums of money were being spent in India by the Allies for the purchase of food and raw material; the producers of wheat, oil-seeds, cotton, jute, coal, iron, were benefiting largely; and though the losses of the Indian Army were considerable,[1] they were slight when distributed over so large a population; they could not affect India in the same way as the much larger losses borne by the smaller populations of European countries affected them. There could not therefore be the same vivid interest in the war and the same stern determination to see it through that there was in France and Great Britain. It is all the more wonderful therefore that

[1] The official figure is 64,449 killed and died, with 69,214 wounded [cf. *Statistics of the Military Effort of the British Empire*, p. 237].

India put forth the effort she did; and when we compare what she actually accomplished with what even those who knew her best before the war would have expected of her the achievement was truly marvellous.

For it must be again emphatically noted that the Indian Army was not organized for operations outside the Indian Empire except immediately beyond its frontier. India was expected to undertake the defence of India. But it was not expected to send armies to distant countries. It had not therefore either the organization or the equipment for that which it was called upon to carry out during the war; and if flaws, defects, and deficiencies were only too apparent during the course of the war, now the war is over what stands out is the magnificence of the achievement. This achievement is the more remarkable because, except at the very first, Indian troops were for the most part lacking their natural leaders. For a century and a half they had been accustomed to look to British officers to lead them, and such leadership was especially necessary when fighting against a European foe or foes led and inspired by Europeans. But the number of British officers who took the field with an Indian battalion was only twelve, and the losses among them—marked men as they were—had been terribly heavy in the early days in France. New officers had therefore to be found, and the officers found were mostly new not only to the Indian Army but to military service altogether. So the difficulties of getting a full military effort out of India were vastly greater than they would have been if large reserves of British officers knowing and known by Indian troops had been available.

So much for India's effort during the war. But what of the results? How has the war affected India? Especially how is India's unity with the Empire affected? These are questions we must answer in conclusion. No one can say that the results are what was expected. It might have been expected that after a victorious war in which India had not—considering her huge population—suffered any grievous loss in manhood and had suffered little or no material loss, she would be contented, prosperous, and happy. It might have been expected further that when the British had played such a glorious part and at the close of the war stood at Baghdad and Mosul, Jerusalem and Aleppo, at the gates of Constantinople and on the banks of

the Rhine, and when the whole German fleet was in their hands, the prestige of the British in India would never have stood higher or anything like so high. Yet the amazing fact is that India was less contented after the war than it was before, and British prestige was lower; though whether this will affect the permanent unity of India with the Empire we will presently inquire.

Many and various were the causes which tended to unsettle India. Perhaps the main cause was the fact that we were fighting for freedom and against domination. She had helped Great Britain to repel the Germans and keep Great Britain free from foreign domination. Why then should not she herself be free from British domination? This was the unsettling thought which ran like lightning through the Indian mind, and certain events helped to add momentum to it. First in importance was the Irish rebellion. If Ireland, one of the component parts of the very heart of the Empire, saw fit to rise and endeavour to free itself from the Empire—making this effort of dissociation at the extreme crisis of the most critical war in which the Empire had ever been engaged—might not India also be well advised in dissociating herself? Yet another unsettling event was the Russian revolution. The Irish rebellion had failed. But the Russian revolution had succeeded. The Russian people had risen, turned out their rulers, and established themselves—or may have seemed to the outside world to have established themselves—in the seat of authority. Russia had dispensed with emperors, governors, ruling classes; and was governing itself through the—apparently—freely chosen representatives of the people. Why should not India do the same? This was another disturbing thought.

Next, there were not lacking agents to propagate these ideas and press them home, and stir up every bit of bad blood that existed, or could be made to exist, between British and Indians. The group of men who had succeeded in seizing power in Russia were actuated by an idea which in their view could only be successful if not Russia alone but the whole world shared in and acted on it. For the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' to be successful, the proletariat of the whole world must dictate. There was little chance of getting the proletariat of India to join effectively in any such scheme. But if England could be given trouble in India it would be so much

easier to break down the opposition in England to the world dictatorship of the proletariat. So the Bolshevists in every insidious way strove to unsettle the Indian mind and instigate Indians against British.

Then the Mohammedans of India were unsettled. They number nearly eighty millions, and they had always had in their hearts a certain compunction about fighting against Turkey. There is a strong religious bond between all Mohammedans as there is between Christians or between Hindus, and when the claims of religion and nationality conflict there is much disturbance of spirit. In ordinary times there is not so very much interest taken by the Mohammedans of India in the Turks. In fact a great many of the Indian Mohammedans are descendants of men and women who were forcibly converted to Mohammedanism, and retain much of their original Hindu habits and attitude of mind. But when the outstanding ruler in the Mohammedan world was not only attacked but crushed in the final downfall of the whole Germanic League, then Mohammedan feeling throughout the world was stirred. The Turks had acted as fools in throwing in their lot with the Germans—this was allowed, and no one would have objected to their receiving any ordinary punishment. But when it came to the Sultan of Turkey, the Caliph, the supreme personage in Islam, being reduced to the position of a petty ruler in Asia Minor, shorn of his Arabian possessions, of Palestine, Syria, most of Thrace, and perhaps even of Constantinople itself, then Mohammedans everywhere—not excluding India—quivered with excitement and many with deep resentment. This was another inevitable result of the war and a most disturbing factor in India.

Lastly was the cry of 'self-determination'. In the closing year of the war, when the terms of peace were being more freely and openly discussed, the doctrine of self-determination was being preached with ever-increasing emphasis. Here was another unsettling thought for India. India was a nation. If other nations were to have the right of self-determination, why should not India have the same right? If Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, and others were to be allowed to choose their own destiny, why should not India choose hers?

No wonder with all these stirring questions in the air there was unsettlement and unrest in the mind of India, and

doubtless there was also another thought at work. It has been a very common experience after this war that every nation has had an inclination to sink back into itself, and be by itself alone and quiet for a time and unworried by any neighbour however great a friend that neighbour may be. All the nations had had enough of fighting one group and mixing on unusually intimate terms with another group. They were tired and exhausted and irritable, and wanted to have a rest from one another. Perhaps India was in something of the same mood at the end of the war. Perhaps Great Britain was too. Hence from this cause alone there may have been much kicking against the pricks.

So there were, in all truth, sufficient causes of trouble, but it must not be supposed that the responsible Government of the country took no notice of the state of popular feeling or no measures to meet the aspirations which were springing up around them. The British Government in India always had held the intention of associating Indians with them in the government of the country, and it was only a question of pace how soon India should be granted responsible government. The Minto-Morley Reform scheme inaugurated only a few years before the war was a big step in that direction, and even while the war was in progress the Government contemplated another and greater step. Early in 1916 Lord Hardinge prepared a scheme to meet the rising aspirations of the Indians, and Lord Chelmsford, as soon as he came to India as Viceroy in 1916, set about elaborating another scheme. The Indians were growing impatient, and with their quick impulsive natures were clamouring for full self-government, on the Dominion model, straight away. But in so vast a country as India, with so numerous and varied a population, and while war on so stupendous a scale was actually being waged, it was impossible to rush a constitutional reform scheme of such magnitude through at high speed. Consultation and deliberation were essential, and it was not till the end of 1916 that Lord Chelmsford's scheme could be completed and dispatched to England. Then followed further examination and deliberation while Mr. Austen Chamberlain was still at the India Office ; and it was not till August 20th, 1917, that Mr. Montagu, who a few weeks previously had succeeded Mr. Chamberlain, was able to announce in the House of Commons the final decision of the Cabinet.

LORD CHELMSFORD

It would have made matters easier in India if this decision had been made more swiftly, and it would have been more impressive if when made it had been announced on a fitting occasion, with fitting ceremonial, and by the most fitting personage. For it was a decision of momentous consequence to both India and the Empire, and its importance should have been strongly emphasized. As it was it was baldly announced by the Secretary of State for India in answer to a question in the House of Commons. It was in brief that responsible self-government was to be the goal of British policy in India. Indians were to be increasingly associated with the British in every branch of the administration, and more than that there was to be a gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. That is to say, responsible self-government was not to be given at once but only in successive stages, and it was added that the British Government and the Government of India must be the judges of the time and measure of each advance. On the other hand, substantial steps were to be taken at once—or rather as soon as possible—to bring the principle into effect. This announcement did, in a sense, only put into definite words what had been for years past the underlying idea in British policy in India. But the importance of the announcement lay in the fact that the British did now for the first time definitely and most formally state the goal at which they were aiming and intended to back their words by deeds.

Very soon after the announcement Mr. Montagu went to India to work out in conjunction with Lord Chelmsford the details of the scheme, and eventually the full scheme was passed through Parliament and in a little more than a year from the termination of the war was brought into operation. Into the details of that scheme it is unnecessary to enter. It is sufficient to state that it did associate Indians with the British very much more largely in the administration of the country and did form a very big step forward in the direction of responsible self-government of the Canadian or Australian type. It did not meet the approval of the extremists whose eyes were fixed on the fabled golden age when every Indian ruler was wise and all Indians were good and India from end to end was happy and contented. But it went a great deal farther than

any one before the war had contemplated, and was in any case evidence that the British Government were making some attempt to apply to India the principles for which they were fighting in the war. There was trouble enough in India at the end of the war, but the Government of India were of opinion that there would have been a great deal more had not some such step been taken to meet the expectation of the people.

In another direction also the British Government sought to satisfy Indian aspirations. Indian troops were fighting alongside British troops from the Home Country and the Dominions in every theatre of war, and it was felt that India ought to be admitted, with the Dominions, to the Supreme War Council and share in the responsibility for the general direction of the war. So Sir Satyendra Sinha, representing British India, and the Maharaja of Bikaner, representing the Indian States, were sent to represent India, with the Secretary of State for India, at the first Imperial War Council. Sir Satyendra Sinha, afterwards Lord Sinha, was an Indian of great distinction and remarkable ability, who first made his name at the Calcutta Bar and was the first Indian member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. He had also been President of the Indian National Congress, and in that capacity exercised a sound and moderating influence over the extremists. The Maharaja of Bikaner was a chief of very ancient lineage, a man who had displayed interest and ability in both political and military affairs, and had on the occasion of the great war and on other occasions put the military resources of his state freely at the disposal of the British Government and himself served with his troops and on the staff. These two men, the one a high-spirited Rajput soldier, the other a keen-witted Bengali lawyer, were each in his way peculiarly well adapted to represent India among the statesmen and soldiers of the Empire, and Indians at once recognized that by their presence in the Councils of the Empire the status of India had been definitely and openly raised in the eyes of the world.

This impression was accentuated when India was called upon to send representatives not only to the Imperial Councils for waging the war but also to the Allied Council for settling the peace. India could feel that she in truth was regarded as an integral part of the Empire and was acquiring an interest in shaping the Empire's destiny. At the great Peace Con-

ference of all the Allies as at the War Council of the constituent members of the Empire she had, through her representatives, the opportunity of presenting and urging India's point of view and India's interests; while, as further evidence of the desire of the British Government to associate Indians with them, Sir Satyendra Sinha was created a peer with a seat in the House of Lords and appointed Under-Secretary of State for India and subsequently, under the new reform scheme, Governor of Behar and Orissa.

Finally, as a direct result of the war, a step of the highest importance, though fraught with the utmost risk, was taken when Indians were admitted into the commissioned ranks of the Indian Army on the same status as British officers. This was a matter which had from time to time been considered for more than fifty years. There were many obvious advantages. There were as many less obvious dangers. It would seem absurd on the face of it that a veteran Indian officer in an Indian regiment should be under the orders of the most junior and untried British subaltern; and it was obviously bad in principle that while an Indian in the civil line could, like Lord Sinha, rise to a position on the Viceroy's Executive Council and even sit on the Imperial War Council, yet an Indian in military service could not rise to the position of a British lieutenant. The main difficulty was that British subalterns stoutly objected to serving under Indians in the life-and-death conditions of active service. In individual cases a particular British subaltern would have no objection to serving under a particular Indian of known and proved military capacity and military spirit. But subalterns in general were highly reluctant to serving—in actual warfare—under Indians in general who might be placed over them. A further difficulty was that when British and Indian troops were acting together, the command of British soldiers might devolve upon an Indian officer, and it was by no means certain how far British soldiers, in the rough and tumble of stern warfare, would accept this position. However, in spite of these weighty objections the step was taken. Approved Indians were given the opportunity of competing for admission to the military college at Sandhurst, and, like English boys, of receiving commissions in the Indian Army.

Whether these steps, great as they are, will really satisfy

the Indians and make and keep them contented to remain within the Empire it is too early yet to say. Extremists will always pester for more, it is certain; and it may be safely assumed that the time will never be when extremists cease to clamour. But apart from men of this type, who never are and never would be satisfied but only exist for hearing their own voices, there are many thoughtful persons—British and Indian—who consider that the two peoples differ so fundamentally in their deepest spiritual attitude that there never can be any real union between the British and Indian races. The civilization, the ideas and ideals, the whole outlook on life are so different that it is believed that the one could never unite with the other. The British are supposed to value most in life all those things which contribute to material prosperity—money, railways, telegraphs, motor cars. The Indians are supposed to value most in life all that ministers to spiritual prosperity, the ideal of poverty, resignation, contemplation; and between these twain there can, it is said, be no true intimacy of union.

Differences of course there are between Indians and British. Differences there are, too, between one Englishman and another, and between one Indian and another. No two Englishmen and no two Indians are in all respects exactly alike. But the differences do not preclude unity, and the war has shown examples of unity between Indians and British which remorselessly shatter the theory that men of different civilization and different spiritual outlook cannot unite together.

The Englishmen who most admire motor cars and railways and big deposits in the bank value as highly as any Indian the spiritual qualities of high courage and fine comradeship. In hundreds of cases that courage and comradeship was displayed by British officers serving with Indian regiments, and Indians had the opportunity of observing at the closest possible quarters that British, however much they may value material progress, could yet display high spiritual qualities. Lockhart Elliot and Hodson of the Guides, Kelly of the 23rd Pioneers, and many others had shown a devotion to their regiment, to the profession of arms, to their country, which compelled the admiration and drew the affections of Indians as no political reforms could ever do; and British officers were not one whit less admiring of the magnificent courage and keen loyalty shown by Indians. Differences of every conceiv-

able kind there were between British and Indians in these regiments—difference of race, of religion, of up-bringing, of outlook. But just as real as the differences was the unity which existed between them, the unity which comes of loyalty of man to man in a cause of common interest to them all, and of valuing above all else, in the supreme moments of life, the same high qualities which are common to the whole human race.

This strong tie of loyal comradeship between British and Indian will not lightly disappear. Hundreds of the best British officers and Indian officers and men have been killed. But by their very death they have accentuated the tradition, and the tradition will remain. Having been it must ever be. Only the occasion and the man will be needed to call forth the ancient comradeship, and only wisdom is required to cause it to permeate from the army into all parts of the body politic. And as shining examples of that spirit may be taken, on the one hand, that officer of the Indian Army who mainly through the exercise of it had such unique success in leading the young Australian armies to war and who is now Commander-in-Chief in India; on the other, that fine old Rajput chief who, in spite of his seventy years, insisted upon sharing with his British and Indian comrades the hardships and dangers of the battle-fields of France. There is no Indian who would not feel himself attached to Birdwood. There is no Englishman who would not have loved Sir Pertab Singh. The two personify that which is in common between Indians and British, and which unites them in spite of the differences which distinguish but need not separate them.

Lastly, as a focus and rallying-point for all that makes for unity between India and the Empire is the British Throne. Simply as an institution the Throne is of incalculable value for bringing to a point the collective sentiment and the common interest and aspirations of all the peoples which compose the Empire. But that value has been immeasurably increased by the personal qualities of the present Royal Family. Of that something has already been said. Here it need only be noted that the self-sacrificing activities not only of the King but of every single member of the Royal Family during the War, and the feeling and understanding interest they showed in India and in the welfare and behaviour of Indian troops, strengthened, deepened, and intensified that strong feeling

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of attachment to the Throne which Queen Victoria lished and King Edward had successfully maintaine

Indians are getting to feel more and more that th *their* King just as much as he is an Englishman's King, and, however urgent and importunate is the cry for self-government, only the smallest whisper is heard asking for separation from the monarchy—a whisper not louder indeed than might be heard in England itself and of just as little significance.

These are the powerful influences making for unity and which go to counteract the strong disrupting tendencies. But a mightier influence still may be even now emerging as a direct result of the war. The heart of England has always beaten to the heart of India: it may be that the war has also so stirred the soul of England that in a common aspiration after the loftiest things of the spirit India and Great Britain may eventually find their firmest bond of union.